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The Saturday Review of Literature

EDITED BY HENRY SEIDEL CANBY

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Back from Nature

THE intense love of wild nature which used to be a characteristic trait of the American books that were most American seems to be disappearing. It has made its mark on American literature, gathered indeed a nature literature for itself, on which at least one book* and many essays have been written, and it may be said that the honey which Thoreau sucked from the varied slopes of New England is the richest and most pungent of its kind. There is a passion in his rapt studies which makes the love passions of his contemporary New Englanders seem thin and cold. And not merely the enthusiast Muir and the pastoral Burroughs, but forgotten practitioners, like Abbott of New Jersey and Olive Thorne Miller, stir the imagination with the intensity of their obsession by wild life. A warbler, a hepatica, a hermit thrush, an islanded pine left from the great woods, have acquired for these foresters a quality which is less philosophic but more immediately human than the immanence of Wordsworth's daffodils. Such refinements upon wild nature as theirs represent perhaps the last mood of the rough romantic passion which had inspired the pioneers.

From Thoreau to Burroughs the course of this literature is plain. Afterward the decadence begins. Birds and animals in Thompson-Seton and his many successors must live in story plots and dramatic adventures. The call of the wild is dramatized and becomes a spotlight upon weasel or goshawk, which turn to figures of heroic romance. It is no longer the wilderness as a means of expanding the soul, but sensation that interests. A swamp or a wild apple tree becomes universal in Thoreau; in the decadent books we look for a chase, a murder, an escape, a combat. At the end of the process is the bed-time story of an unnatural bunny and his friends.

* * *

Nature in literature has thus declined into sentimentalism, or gone into scientific description which lacks the imagination of "Walden" or of Muir on the high Sierras. So all good things rust, rot, or change, not necessarily for the ultimate worse. But the inevitable decay of moods and minds is not the only reason for our new distances with Mother Nature of the Wild. In this quick half century we have shifted from introspection to extraspection. Men like Thoreau were subjective to a degree only possible in a generation whose belief in the illimitable unity of the soul was still untouched by psychological doubt as to the nature of consciousness and the conditions of thought. It is himself that Thoreau would capture in the echoes of the thrush's song in a hemlock dusk, or the flame of a cardinal flower in the marsh. High pines, wild geese flying southward, the depths of clear lake water, upland pastures, the moose, the Indian, all summon the spirit from its reticences, and the experience is more real, because more vivid, than the routine of ordiary experience. He is studying his own soul which, like the eremite's, steals out in solitude. It was true, for a while, of the American spirit, that it was most original in the woods.

Nature literature, then, was in a peculiar sense self-study. In England, the book of Jefferies, more rhapsodical and less revealing than the American writings, were also self questings, and no work of Rudyard Kipling's is so personal as "The Jungle Books." But in America wild nature meant more than beauty released or strangeness brought home to symbolize the ethics of a race. A literary interpretation was a liaison with a new continent, new skies, new birds, new airs, new earth. It was a reminder in chosen words of that freedom to do and suffer and enjoy on the soil which generations of immigrants had found intoxicating. This was all that remained of the hope for a new man inspired by an untrammeled continent. The aspiration passed into Cooper and gave his romance a compelling quality which his literary crudities could not destroy; it passed into Emerson and Whitman. It is the subtle heart of nature literature.

Wild nature has not lost its powerful charm.

(*Continued on page* 560)

*Nature in American Literature. By NORMAN FOERSTER. New York: The Macmillan Co. 1926. $1.75.

Golden Falcon

By ROBERT P. TRISTRAM COFFIN

HE sees the circle of the world
Alive with wings that he
Was born to rend; his eyes are stars
Of amber cruelty.

God lit the fire in his eyes
And bound swords on his feet,
God fanned the furnace of his heart
To everlasting heat.

His two eyes take in all the sky,
East, West, North, and South,
Opposite as poles they burn;
And death is in his mouth.

Death because his Maker knew
That death is last and best,
Because He gives to those He loves
The benison of rest.

Golden, cruel word of God
Written on the sky!
Living things are lovely things,
And lovely things must die.

This Week

"Prohibition at Its Worst." Reviewed by *Fabian Franklin.*

"The Story of the Catholic Church." Reviewed by *T. Lawrason Riggs.*

"Critical Opinions of Samuel Johnson." Reviewed by *C. B. Tinker.*

"A History of Cornwall, Connecticut." Reviewed by *H. S. Canby.*

"Little Pitchers." Reviewed by *Robert B. Macdougall.*

"The Kays." Reviewed by *L. W. Dodd.*

"Before the Bombardment." Reviewed by *Leonard Bacon.*

"Ignatius Loyola." Reviewed by *Ernest Sutherland Bates.*

Next Week, or Later

A Note on the Modern Novel Pattern. By *Mary Austin.*

Amy Lowell as a Poet

By HERVEY ALLEN

IT is characteristic of the ambition and overpowering nervous energy of Amy Lowell that she planned to prolong the sound of her voice even after the date of nature's verdict when "the rest is silence," and that she has seemingly succeeded. In reality, however, this is not so. The posthumous poems, which are now appearing in three separate packages*, for the most part belong to the period when she was hardest at work upon her biography of John Keats, and if they represent anything at all, they are so many tokens of a reservoir of creative and commenting energy so cribbed and cabined in by the circumstances and accidents of her life and environment that even the immense draft upon its potential which the labor on Keats implied was not sufficient to relieve the pressure, much less exhaust the supply.

The circumstances, which in a large measure served to frustrate her personality of the normal experiences of a complete cycle of life, were a serious accident many years ago while driving followed by a threatened invalidism, and a series of major surgical operations, none of which was completely successful, and all of which finally culminated in a condition that ended in a fatal stroke. She was looking in her mirror when, as it were, she saw death appear in her own countenance, and it is also characteristic of this great woman that her complete control of herself and of all those about her ceased only with consciousness itself. These are pertinent biographical facts which must be considered in relation to her work, for all of the energies of a gigantically virile personality were perforce concentrated in her intellect, and the trace of this condition is both fortunately and unfortunately present in her works. Indeed, it is the very vigor and masterful memory of her personality, which, at so early a date as this after her death, renders it difficult to approach her work from a detached and critical standpoint.

* * *

Nevertheless, the fact remains that Miss Lowell has been withdrawn from the scene of her labors. The great bulk of her work is now before us, and it may be approached and appraised not as the unfinished record of an able controversial contemporary, but for what it actually is, a given example of literary art. It is frankly the purpose to attempt here the outlines of such an appraisal, or at least to suggest a pertinent method of approach in such an attempt.

The implications of space in an article such as this will, it is felt, need only to be mentioned to be fully apparent. Of Amy Lowell as a critic, or as a dynamic personality of wide and important literary influence, it will not be possible to treat here at all. The discussion must perforce be somewhat rigidly narrowed to her poetry alone, and to the tests of it proposed, i. e., were her themes important, and were they adequately phrased; what was her governing attitude toward her art, and what human values emerged from it? And finally, as a result of the discussion—what is the apparent place of her work in the poetry of English? It should also be borne in mind that for the great majority of poets the last question is never asked. Above and beyond all this, there will be a frank attempt here to examine the poetry of Amy Lowell from an

*East Wind. By AMY LOWELL. Boston: Houghton Mifflin Co. 1926. $2.25.

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assumed distance—say a decade or twenty-five years hence. If some of the objects in the vista thus obtained by looking backward seem to be belittled, it should be remembered that just as the artist sometimes obtains perspective by devices, so it is frequently the function of the critic to anticipate the shrinkage of the bulk of the present in the domain of time.

The earliest known work from Amy Lowell's pen appeared in a little volume published for or by her or her mother, entitled "Dream Drops," in which is recorded the fact that, at an extremely childish date, Amy Lowell was writing verse. The poems are in no way remarkable and both they and the volume in which they appeared have nothing but a collector's interest. At the age of thirty she had decided to be a poet and spent eight years in careful preparation. The first fruits of this resolve became visible in 1912 in "A Dome of Many Colored Glass," in which the themes treated were the most avowedly autobiographical of any of her work. Significantly enough the book begins with a moon poem, "Before the Altar"—a poet stands there—"With empty hands. . . . Empty and silent, I . . . myself the sacrifice." In "A Fairy Tale" occur some especially significant lines that from their context are obviously personal and enormously tragic:

> . . . Along the parching highroad of the world
> No other soul shall bear mine company.
> Always shall I be teased by semblances,
> With cruel impostures, which I trust awhile
> Then dash to pieces, as a careless boy
> Flings a kaleidoscope, which shattering
> Strews all the ground about with colored sherds.
> So I behold my visions on the ground
> No longer radiant, an ignoble heap
> Of broken, dusty glass, and so, unlit
> Even by hope or faith, my dragging steps
> Force me forever through the passing days.

The second poem in the book was about Keats. In another "I hear the flowers talking in the dawn," characteristically enough "Behind a wall." She was already decorating the house of her art with "A Japanese Wood Carving," addressing John Keats as "Great Master," talking about New England in "Monadnock in Early Spring," turning to history for material, after reading Trevelyan's 'Garibaldi and the Making of Italy,' " and wondering about the nature of poetry. In other words, by 1912, in her first book, Miss Lowell had already indicated not only the type of themes which interested her but had already treated many of them. Her peculiarly feminine philosophy of art and her attitude toward life in general were also clear.

* * *

Her art was "a dome of many colored glass," —not the dome Shelley was speaking of. "Life," says Shelley, "life is a dome of many coloured glass," and it "stains" the white radiance of eternity. With him life and the expression of it in art were one. But Miss Lowell asks herself in *her* "Dome of Many Colored Glass" about her art, a thing apart from life.

> What is poetry? Is it a mosaic
> Of colored stones which curiously are wrought
> Into a pattern? Rather glass that's taught
> By patient labor any hue to take
> And glowing with a sumptuous splendor. . . .

With all the terrifying energy of a childless and unmated woman she now set out to put the colored stones into curiously wrought patterns and by "patient labor" to teach the glass how to become "glowing with a sumptuous splendor." By "glass" she did not mean the one which it has been recommended that poets should hold up to nature. Cut off from the prime biological experiences of life by her tragic physical predicament and from many other vital experiences by the estate to which it had pleased God to call her, she continued, with a few major additions, to elaborate upon the same themes under various titles, to decorate and to arrange. And as always happens when the sources of inspiration are literary and secondary rather than primarily the expression of emotional experience, she became more interested in the way that she said things than in what she had to say. "A Dome of Many Colored Glass" was phrased in traditional forms upon which she conferred no peculiar distinction; the poems which followed wore another disguise. Of the nature of that disguise it will be necessary to speak elsewhere, and to confine ourselves here to the themes, with the end in view of appraising their literary value.

"Sword Blades and Poppy Seed," which appeared in 1914, was described without any intent of irony by a licensed biographer as "one of the literary events of the year." This book was notable for its preoccupation with the mode of its phrasing rather than for its content. It was well set forth by the publisher's brochure, issued in 1916, as follows: "We find free verse and sonnets; pictorial pieces and lyrics; long narratives in rhymed couplets or stanzas, with a flavor of romance and mystery, imagistic cameos; and, perhaps, most important of all, the first examples of 'polyphonic prose' which have ever appeared in the language." We do not learn anything even here about what was said, only how it was said. The "flavor" was there. Taking up the book one is forced to agree it is flavor and method alone. "Many people enjoyed 'Sword Blades and Poppy Seed' who had never cared much for poetry." Miss Lowell was already engaged by the Imagists, and in the "free verse" controversy. It was 1914 and another equally important controversy was also taking place which engaged her attention almost not at all. She was now busy inventing by a process of rationalization, or borrowing from John Gould Fletcher and others, a series of terms to disguise from herself and the world the fact that her poetry was largely written in prose. The forms in the dust storm so ably raised are now, as it settles, once more taking on their old familiar outlines.

* * *

"Men, Women and Ghosts," her next volume of poetry, continued the experiments in writing poems in the twilight border land between verse and prose. There were also some poems in the dialect of New England, obviously stunts in the Lowell tradition. But the book was chiefly notable for a poem called "Patterns" in which the theme of frustration emerged triumphantly, as it has in so many other poets, in a genuine utterance. It was a cry of suffering out of her own life experience and therefore one of the most successful poems that she ever wrote. She was tired of patterns—"Christ, what are patterns for!" In the next book there was consequently a notable strengthening of themes.

With "Can Grande's Castle" three new themes appeared. "Sea-Blue and Blood-Red" treated of the conflict between desire and duty in the story of Lord Nelson's affair with Lady Hamilton. "The Bronze Horses" were a symbol of Time treading down all things ruthlessly; certainly not a startling contribution, and in "Guns as Keys and the Gate Swings," the narrative was concerned with the impinging of the Occident upon the Orient.

Oriental themes and forms now began to preoccupy Miss Lowell considerably. She was probably drawn to them unconsciously by the fact that they offered her at once an esoteric and an abstract field in which to experiment beyond the realm of the traditional in English verse. Oriental art to the Occident is largely decorative; and alike in its landscape, its sculpture, and its poetry remote from us, existing so far as we are concerned in a kind of artistic limbo. It was from this highly conventional and congealed Nowhere that Miss Lowell attempted to translate her borrowed products into the Here. A typhoon in the literary teapot was created over the "Hokku," a confined Japanese form for which great epigrammatic and disciplinary virtues were claimed. It turned out to be a precise arrangement whose arbitrary construction had little value in itself except as an exercise. There are a great many pages of that kind of thing in Miss Lowell's works. They are broken lines of prose with a faint twinge of conversational charm. Whether they be poems by Japanese definition, the Japanese can say. There is no doubt whatever into what category they fall in English.

In "Pictures of the Floating World" occurs the following prose paragraph on William Blake:

> He said he saw the spangled wings of angels in a tree at Peckham Rye, and Elijah walking in the haying-fields; so they beat him for his lies, and prenticed him to an engraver. Now his books sell for broad, round, golden guineas. That's a bouncing turn of fortune! But we have the guineas, since our fathers were thrifty men and knew the value of gold.

It is submitted that this is a hopelessly banal recital of facts about William Blake. In Miss Lowell's book the paragraph is broken into ten lines, the exact arrangement of which we defy anyone to reproduce except by good luck, without looking at the "poem." It occupies all of page 181. If irony about "our fathers" is meant it is enormously far-fetched.

In "Pictures of the Floating World" there is a section entitled "As Toward War." The present writer does not hesitate to say that, all in all, the material gathered under this head constitutes the most trivial and remote comment on the World War made by any writer of note in English on either side of the Atlantic. A myopic architect is discharged for insanely designing a landscape garden like a fortress, and commits suicide; Miss Lowell visits another fort and wonders, "Is it possible that, at night, the little flitter bats hang under the lever-wheels of the disappearing guns?"—to escape the searchlights, of course. But she describes the *camouflage* pattern on a troop ship, perfectly. In September, 1918, there was a nice day, the afternoon was peculiarly successful, and she promises herself to remember it after the war! "In the Stadium" is the only "war poem" that has anything to say about the war with first hand emotion and comment.

"Many Swans," a sun myth of the North American Indians, was a long and for the most part a prose-poem, the theme of which was the occasion for a *tour de force* on Indian folk-lore. The Indian in it climbs up into the sky and gets into considerable trouble by returning with a disc of power "hung on him." He is very sad because everything is burnt up. At last a kind lady, The-One-Who-Walks-All-Over-The-Sky, takes the "round thing" back again and leaves him. "He wept." Fifty-seven pages are solemnly devoted to this cosmic allegory which is said to be peculiarly North American and once received the official applause of the Phi Beta Kappas at Columbia University. In the same volume, "Legends," there is also a long legend about porcelain in which the legend is entirely lost amid the porcelain and there is also a "Memorandum confided by a Yucca to a Passion Vine." In the latter Miss Lowell was dealing with Peru and the Incas, probably the most glorious and little tapped source for romance, epic themes, and imagination-firing material in all the Americas.

All of this story, replete with ten thousand majestic feats of arms, human tragedies, love, lust, murder, treachery, friendship, courage, avar[illegible] umph, defeat, and Gargantuan suffering was [illegible] iar to Amy Lowell. Her comment upon i[illegible] pretty legend whispered by one flower to [illegible] It is purely conversational; "The Turkey-buzzard was chatting with the Condor high up in the White Cordillera,"—later on a fox trots by and we follow him as the hero of the story until he commits the sacrilege of trying to rape the moon. That is how the moon got its marks!

It will not be possible to continue a chronicle of the themes that engaged Miss Lowell to any greater length. We have here discussed some of the major ones. Whether they are of primary significance or of great value in the literature of English, must be left to the reader, for it is by their relative value in that literature and by the readers who will approach them hereinafter that their importance must ultimately be judged.

There are a number of other books of poetry in addition to those already touched upon. Following in the footsteps of James Russell Lowell, a cousin of Miss Lowell's grandfather, she issued anonymously "A Critical Fable." In the late 1840's a very famous critic and poet described James Russell Lowell's essay in the realm of satire in part as follows:

> "The Fable for the Critics" .. . has not the name of its author on the title page; and but for some slight foreknowledge of the literary opinions, likes, dislikes, whims, prejudices, and crotchets of Mr. James Russell Lowell, we should have had much difficulty in attributing so loose a brochure to him. "The Fable" is essentially "loose." . . . Some good hints and some sparkling witticisms do not serve to compensate us for its rambling plot (if plot it can be called) and for the want of artistic finish so particularly noticeable throughout the work. . . . This to be sure is not the very loftiest order of verse; for it is far inferior to either that of the imagination or that of the passions, but it is the loftiest region in which Mr. Lowell can get his breath without difficulty.

Only a few lines of Mr. Lowell's "Fable" are now occasionally remembered. They apply to Edgar Allan Poe who wrote the passage just quoted. The rest of his "Fable" was mostly about persons whom time forgot. Miss Lowell's "Fable" was also in the best family tradition, and in it she mentions among others Robert Frost.

In the roll of Miss Lowell's work in verse it would be unthinkable to omit her translations. Aside from occasional passages from what Mary Austin

(*Continued on page* 568)

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Scientist or Crusader?

PROHIBITION AT ITS WORST. By IRVING FISHER. New York: The Macmillan Co. 1926. $1.75.

Reviewed by FABIAN FRANKLIN

INTO this little book Professor Fisher has poured quite a flood of statistics, and of moral and social judgments. Neither the quantity of the statistics nor the emphasis of the moral and social judgments would, however, mark his book out for special notice. He is an ardent crusader for Prohibition; but there are plenty of others, and there is never any dearth among them either of statistical assertions or of confident judgments. His book is peculiar only in that its author is a man who, in another field, has won a distinguished place as an exemplar of thorough scientific research. The questions of capital importance, therefore, concerning the present work are, first, whether, in its statistical part, it is entitled to the weight which may be presumed to attach to Irving Fisher's standing as a statistical inquirer; and secondly, whether, in its more general aspects, it displays such elevation of thought as may justly be expected on the part of a distinguished scholar.

The first of these questions I shall endeavor to answer in the only way that seems feasible. I shall not attempt to estimate the degree of force to which the array of statistics cited by Professor Fisher is entitled; to do so would require not only more space than is here permitted, but also the devotion of a vast amount of careful inquiry, both into the statistics which he presents and into others which he does not include. What I propose to do, therefore, is to dwell at adequate length on two or three points which seem to me to furnish a conclusive answer to the question.

* * *

A conspicuous feature of the book is a correction applied by Professor Fisher to the statistics of actual arrests for drunkenness; a correction which, although he at first says he will "not insist" on it, e persistently uses with emphasis. It is first introduced to the reader at page 32, the justification or it being stated as follows:

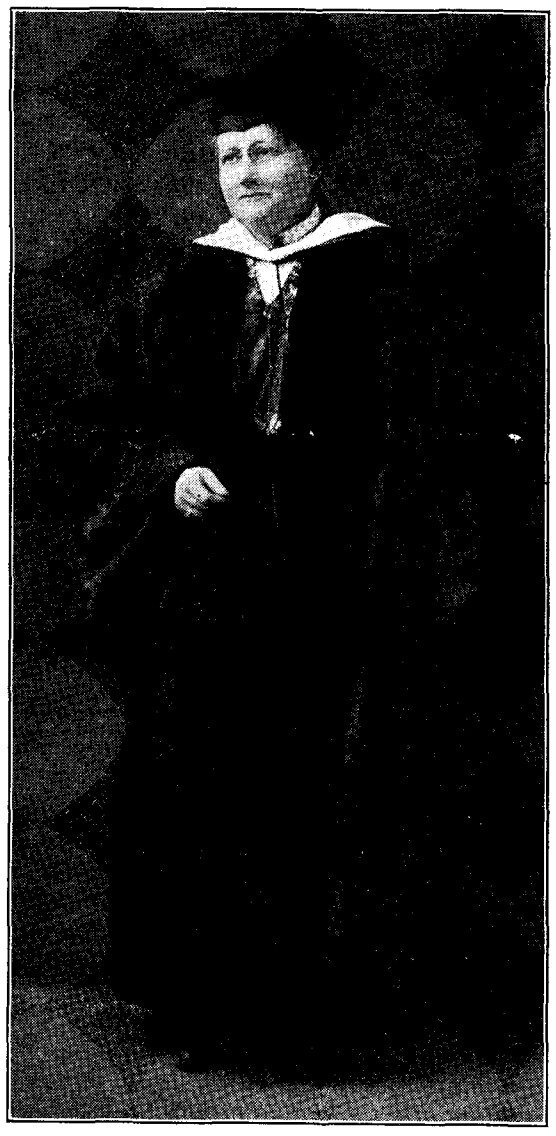
> Robert E. Corradini estimates the percentage of arrests for drunkenness, as attested by police heads, at 40 per cent in pre-prohibition years, and 90 per cent during the latest years of National Prohibition. As Mr. Corradini's statistics of drunkenness arrests, gathered from the police departments of 626 American cities and towns, are generally regarded as standard, I have adopted this estimate, provisionally, in correcting the totals of arrests in Mr. Shirk's tables.

It is a little singular that in this first mention of Mr. Corradini, Professor Fisher should have omitted to state that the gentleman is the Research Secretary of the World League Against Alcoholism; this, however, was doubtless accidental. But how can a man accustomed to logical thinking regard the fact that a person's compilations of statistics of drunkenness arrests are "generally regarded as standard" as a sufficient reason for adopting his estimate of the increase in the severity of the police toward drunkards? Even if Mr. Corradini were not a paid officer of a Prohibition organization, it would be absurd to "adopt" his estimate without adequate investigation. It happens, moreover, that Professor Fisher does give a little evidence intended to fortify our faith in Corradini. "In Exhibit II," he tells us, "appear facsimiles of the signed statements of police heads of various cities, testifying to the increased severity of arrests for drunkenness during the Prohibition period." Turning to Exhibit II, we find that these "various cities" are as follows: Pratt, Kan.; St. Joseph, Mo.; Quincy, Ill.; and Harrisonburg, Va. As there was nothing to compel Mr. Fisher to select these particular little cities, it is a fair presumption that he would have given us something more impressive if he could.

A large part of the effectiveness of the numerous graphs in which Professor Fisher exhibits the alleged reduction of drunkenness is derived from the use of this wonderful 2¼ to 1 correction, so cheerfully "adopted" by him on such absurdly slender ground. But in the case of New York City, a point of a different kind is to be noted. Dealing with an instance so important as this, a scientific investigator would instinctively use every precaution to avoid hasty or superficial conclusions. But Professor Fisher does nothing of the kind. I will say nothing further of his employment of Corradini's 9 to 4 ratio; what I wish to draw attention to is the *trend* of the arrests for drunkenness, as exhibited in Mr. Fisher's own graph and tables. In 1911 arrests for drunkenness were 22,000; in 1916 (the last pre-Prohibition year) in spite of the increase of population, they had fallen to 17,100. Mr. Fisher takes no notice of this; a scientific investigator would not only have taken notice of it, but would have looked up the figures of earlier years to see whether this trend was really significant. If Mr. Fisher had done this, he would have found that arrests for drunkenness in New York City had been 44,100 in 1905 and had been going down throughout the entire period from 1905 to 1916, when they had sunk to the figure above named, 17,100. If a like decline had been shown in Mr. Fisher's Prohibition period,—war-time restrictions 1917 to 1919, national prohibition since 1919—arrests for drunkenness in New York City would have gone down to zero by 1923, whereas there were actually (as Mr. Fisher states) 11,700 such arrests in 1923, and 12,000 in 1924. What checked the remarkable diminution in drunkenness in New York City that (according to the figures) had been going on for eleven years before Prohibition? I haven't the faintest idea what it was; but I know pretty well what Professor Fisher would say it was if the case were reversed.

* * *

With these two exhibits I must be content, though I could add others equally significant. My object is not to discredit Mr. Fisher's statistics, nor to deny



Amy Lowell
(*Courtesy of Mrs. Harold Russell*)

that some of them have real value for his case. My object is simply to illustrate, by two notable examples, the utter absence of the scientific spirit in his dealing with facts; and I have only to add that, while I have been more or less impressed by some of his statistical data, I have not found, in a single instance, any evidence of their having been treated by him in the spirit of an impartial scientific investigator.

To point to such a lapse on the part of a man of Professor Fisher's high moral and intellectual qualities is an unwelcome duty; to account for it would be a difficult task. The one explanation that readily offers itself is that his devotion to Prohibition is carried to a pitch unusual even in Prohibitionist fanatics by his enthusiastic absorption not only in this particular cause, but also in the cause of health-improvement. In dealing with the Prohibition question, this double devotion seems almost to have paralyzed his intellect. This is seen not so much in his treatment of statistics as in statements and arguments of a non-statistical character. Of these also, one or two examples—brief quotations, without comment—must suffice. The whole argument of the chapter on "Personal and Social Liberty" is puerile, but I must content myself with making a single quotation:

> No only does alcoholic drink put a restriction on the liberty of all those about the drinker, but it manacles the drinker himself.
>
> The mental worker who takes alcohol voluntarily puts a yoke upon himself. He limits the exercise of his faculties, for he cannot judge so wisely, will so forcefully, think so clearly, as when his system is free from alcohol. The athlete who takes alcoholic liquor is similarly handicapped, for he is not free to run so fast, jump so high, pitch a baseball so accurately as when his system is free from the drug.

And for instances of absurdity in statement, these two must suffice:

> The important point is that rational grounds exist for the rapidly growing and now almost universal belief that alcohol is always a life shortener and nothing else.
>
> A mild drinker denies that he is drunk, if he does not stagger. But a man who has drunk one glass of beer is one-glass-of-beer drunk.

Let me repeat, in conclusion, that I have not attempted to estimate the value of the multitudinous contents of Professor Fisher's book. All's fish that comes to his net; and of course some of it is really good sound fish. But the book is not entitled to the slightest weight on account of its authorship; every statistical inference, every argument, has to be scrutinized with the same skepticism as if it came from—I won't say Wayne Wheeler, but it is melancholy to find oneself called upon to say of a book by Irving Fisher that it does not sink to the Wayne Wheeler level.

Catholic Annals

THE STORY OF THE CATHOLIC CHURCH. By CUTHBERT WRIGHT. New York: Albert & Charles Boni. 1926. $2.50.

Reviewed by the REV. T. LAWRASON RIGGS

MR. CUTHBERT WRIGHT is one of many non-Catholic critics of Catholicism who have been perplexed or annoyed by the Church's condemnation of fideism—the theory that faith presupposes no rational arguments—and by the Vatican Council's complementary definition concerning the ability of reason to attain some knowledge of God. There is, for instance, Mr. Lytton Strachey's clever gibe about making it of faith that faith was no longer necessary; and there is the well-meaning regret expressed by the Reverend R. J. Campbell, in the account of his spiritual journey from Congregationalism to Anglicanism, at the anti-fideistic pronouncements of Rome.

Mr. Wright, who tries to be sarcastic and friendly towards the Church at the same time, quotes Strachey's epigram with approval and shares Dr. Campbell's regret. The point is most important, since it shows the author's essential attitude towards the institution whose vast history he has attempted to sketch, sometimes with considerable success. The Catholic Church, says Mr. Wright in effect, is in spite of lapses, inconsistencies, and corruptions, a very wonderful, wise, and impressive institution. It has produced splendid heroes, it contains tremendous and lasting spiritual values. But—one must not suppose for a moment that its historical claims are worth a penny! Such being Mr. Wright's state of mind, he is naturally annoyed by the Church's failure to agree "that nothing can be proved, that the basic axiom of religion is faith and nothing but faith."

He should at any rate be better informed about Catholic anti-fideism, which it is absurd to describe as a concession to nineteenth century rationalism or a borrowing from Modernism. Though he fails to realize it, the Modernists' attitude was very similar to Mr. Wright's own. They demanded complete freedom from ecclesiastical authority for the critical and analytical use of reason, and professed to apply it, of course with the anti-miraculous presuppositions of their school, to the study of the gospels, with results approaching as a limit the conclusion that the gospels have little or no historic value. They then proceeded to declare that these negative results made no difference, that the "religious truth" of Christianity was independent of its "historical truth." The Church was more rational than the Modernists in her conviction that the truth or falsity of her historic claim is a question of vital importance. She was likewise more rational in insisting that her dogmas and apologetics presuppose

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a theistic philosophy. The Vatican Council's definition of the knowability of God by reason expresses what Professor Sheldon of Yale has called "the fundamental rationalism of the Catholic position." Far from being a concession to Modernism, the Church's stand in this respect is part of her most ancient tradition. It is an echo of the psalmist, for whom "the heavens declare the glory of God," of St. Paul, for whom invisible things "are clearly seen, being understood by the things that are made," and of Aquinas, who constructed a great edifice of natural theology, based on reason alone, and declared that "faith presupposes reason." The Modernists, however, being Kantians, Pragmatists, Immanentists, and so forth, had no use for such constructive and synthetic application of reason to religious philosophy. Mr. Wright resembles them in this—it is significant that he should barely mention Aquinas—as in his evident indifference concerning the trustworthiness of the gospel narratives.

In his first chapter he outlines the extreme left-wing theory of Christian origins, the gospel according to Drews and Reinach. He ignores the fact that the fantastic views of such "critics" are as alien to the mass of competent authorities, from Harnack to Lagrange, as is the Baconian theory to experts in Elizabethan literature. A footnote informs the reader that this chapter is merely an "exposition of the case against the existence of the historic Christ, which does not represent the author's own opinion." This opinion, we are told, "will become quite obvious if the reader is so patient as to continue the book." The reader's patience is satisfied in the next sentence by the statement that "the approach to Christ can never be made through dates and documents, since there are none of a thoroughly satisfactory nature." So something like the "mythical" theories seems to be Mr. Wright's own view after all. One's impression to this effect is confirmed by numerous later remarks. What *is* "quite obvious" is that Mr. Wright does not think that the historicity of the gospels has any essential bearing on the claims of the Catholic Church.

Historians, Catholic and otherwise, will find much to dispute in the book besides its grotesque accounts of Christian origins. The soundness of many judgments is a matter of opinion, but there are numerous demonstrable errors of fact. It is not true, for instance, that Christian unity "was destroyed by a simple grammatical conjunction." The *Filioque* controversy does not appear at the beginning of the Eastern Schism. It was an afterthought of Photius. The story of a general panic in expectation of the world's end in the year 1000, so dear to Michelet and others, has been completely exploded, notably by the researches of Dom Plaine. It is as dead as the legend of Pope Joan. Abuses have indeed been connected with the system of indulgences, and especially with the famous ones which occasioned Luther's revolt; but to define indulgences as "pardons for sins committed in exchange for cash" is to repeat an unjustifiable error. Mr. Wright himself knows better, as is evident from the definition in his glossary. It is incorrect to speak of mediæval bishops getting their clergy from "seminaries," since these institutions did not exist until after the Tridentine reform. Nor is the Latin rite the "one standard liturgy" of the Catholic Church. The Eastern liturgies are not mere tolerated variations, they are independent developments, just as Catholic as the Latin liturgy, though used by comparatively small numbers of Catholics.

The comments of the book on present-day Catholicism include criticisms which would be largely sound if they were more discriminating. It is perfectly true that most modern ecclesiastical art is bad, that the liturgy which Mr. Wright so wholeheartedly admires is widely neglected, that Pius X's commands in regard to church music are in many places scandalously ignored. It is equally true, however, that the existing signs of better things in all these matters are immensely significant, and these he neglects to mention. The charge of prudery in artistic and literary criticism by modern Catholics is not unfounded; but Mr. Wright's remedy, which seems to consist in a cordial indorsement of Rabelaisian obscenities, will scarcely appeal to self-respecting Catholic artists.

In spite of its errors, its failures to discriminate, its frequent superficialities, and cheap smartnesses, "The Story of the Catholic Church" is a book of considerable interest. Its style, though too often reminiscent of Strachey and Chesterton, is readable and occasionally brilliant. The periods and personalities with which it deals are on the whole admirably chosen. The account of the Elizabethan persecutions is a noteworthy chapter, and the sympathetic description of a Christmas Mass attains a high degree of beauty.

Yet the general effect of this uneven book is one of inadequacy. In order to write even a moderately successful handbook of the Church's history a man needs more than a gift for vivid writing, considerable acquaintance with secondary sources, and sympathy with much that is Catholic in worship and spiritual atmosphere. He needs a thorough study, not only of primary historical sources, but also of Catholic theology.

Johnson as a Critic

THE CRITICAL OPINIONS OF SAMUEL JOHNSON. Edited by Joseph Epes Brown. Princeton: Princeton University Press. 1926. $7.50 net.

Reviewed by Chauncey B. Tinker
Yale University

DURING the last three years a number of books on Samuel Johnson have appeared, all of which have a common and an admirable aim,—to turn the attention of readers from Boswell back to Johnson, from the biography of the disciple back to the principles of the Great Moralist. No reaction could be more natural. An anecdote will illustrate the state into which readers were falling. Not long since the present writer was talking with a friend about the series of treatises entitled "Browning, How to Know Him," "Emerson, How to Know Him," etc. I remarked that there should be a volume, "Johnson, How to Know Him." "Yes," replied my friend, "and it should consist of just two words, *read Boswell*."

It is as a quiet protest against this prevailing taste that the following books have been put together: "Doctor Johnson, a Study in Eighteenth Century Humanism," by Professor Houston (Cambridge, 1923); "Contemporary Criticisms of Dr. Samuel Johnson, His Works and His Biographers," by J. K. Spittal (London, 1923); "Johnson the Essayist, His Opinions on Men, Morals, and Manners," by O. P. Christie (no date); and Professor J. E. Brown's handbook, "The Critical Opinions of Samuel Johnson." Of these the last is by far the most important. It is, professedly, a reference-book, providing, in the first place, a compilation of Johnson's critical dicta, and, secondly, his opinions on specific authors and on their various works.

He who compiles a good handbook may be reckoned among the benefactors of mankind. If we wish to know quickly and exactly what Johnson said, in various places, about (let us assume) blank verse, enthusiasm, Milton's sonnets, the poems of Ossian, or the Metaphysical Poets, we have but to consult Brown's handbook. The alternative is to hunt for the references through some fourteen volumes of Johnson's Works (the so-called index to which is worse than useless), and then to wander off through Boswell's delightfully distracting pages in search of a vaguely remembered phrase. This is the first and great value of the book.

Furthermore, Professor Brown believes that this assemblage of material will provide us with a somewhat detailed view of Johnson's "critical principles," which he summarizes in a judicious and comprehensive preface. Johnson had much to say about principles, and sometimes (perhaps a little unguardedly) seemed to imply that literature could be evaluated with the exactness of science.

As Professor Brown himself concedes, the *application* of the principle is the important thing. It is easy enough for us all to agree on critical principles. Even enemies can agree on them. Take, for example, the imitative function of poetry. All agree that it is Nature that must be imitated. "First follow Nature," wrote Pope. The Romantic poets asserted in chorus that we must "return to Nature." Shakespeare, through the mouth of Hamlet, advises artists to "hold the mirror up to Nature." So far, so good. The principle is of universal acceptance. It is when the critic attempts to judge whether this has been done in a particular case that the trouble begins. Does Shakespeare hold the mirror up to Nature in the ghost-scenes in "Hamlet"? Does Pope hold the mirror up to Nature in "The Rape of the Lock"? Does Shelley follow Nature in "Prometheus Unbound"? What is Nature, anyhow?

Again, we shall all cordially agree on the principle that poetry should be the offspring of passion, and should touch the emotions of the reader. Where is the man who cannot accept Milton's oft-quoted dictum that poetry should be simple, sensuous, and passionate? Ah yes, but it is when we judge and assert that a poet has or has not been passionate that bad blood is aroused. Does "Lycidas," for example, touch the reader's emotions? If you assert (as Johnson did) that the poem is insincere, what is to prevent me from answering back, "I do not find it insincere," and so reducing criticism again to a matter of personal taste and judgment? Does the poetry of Thomas Gray lack passion? Why should I not join issue with Johnson, who thought it artificial, and assert, if I wish, that for me it glows and glitters with emotions? What is to decide in such a dispute, except the consensus of intelligent opinion, in which peradventure I may have a vote?

We all read Johnson's critical opinions with delight because they are always stimulating, even when we disagree with them. Everybody now disagrees with him in his views on blank verse, but his views are interesting nevertheless. Johnson is never sedative. He may be wrong, stubborn, or prejudiced, but he never stagnates. Here, as everywhere else, his opinions tend to clear the air, to get issues sharply and clearly defined, lines of division drawn. To read Johnson is to part company with muddy thought and gurgling emotion.

It follows that Professor Brown, in compiling these opinions, has produced a book in which it is possible to take great pleasure. Nobody could possibly read it through, but we may read in it to our great delight, and, let me add, to our considerable advantage.

Back from Nature

(*Continued from page* 557)

The wilderness is still at suburban backdoors, still deep if no longer wide. But the mind has changed. We are all for analyzing now, all for groping in the minds of others. The contemplative mood has passed. It is the chemist with his test tube or the physicist with his ray who is the modern symbol of literature. We are too much interested in our neighbors' complexes, or our own inhibitions, to be concerned with expansion of soul. Wild nature can tell us nothing because even if wild nature moves us we believe that mere emotion is of no significance. It is not the soul's aspiration toward beauty but the mind's behavior under strain that is engrossing. By dint of looking at the inside of others minds we have become curiously objective. "For this, for everything, we are out of tune" Wordsworth wrote a century too early. Only the spenders and the getters were out of tune for his nature, but even our poets have lost kinship with life outside the limits of a psychology predominantly behavioristic.

Perhaps we moderns have passed beyond the last impulse of the romantic movement, and for us souls must contract and clarify in order to be significant. Perhaps it is city living and too rapid transportation. In any case the golden cord is broken, and if we are to share the high solace of Emerson or Browning's rapture we must take it in literature, not in experience with the external world. For such a contact we are no longer ready. The American West, where there is still an uplifting beauty of wilderness, is voiceless except for railway folders. The publicity man has succeeded Muir. As for New England, set a modern writer upon a hilltop and expect notes on dissociation, or a study of human moods, but never a literature in which nature is powerfully loved for the sake of the wild in man.

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New England's Strength

A HISTORY OF CORNWALL, CONNECTICUT: A Typical New England Town. By EDWARD C. STARR. New Haven: Tuttle, Morehouse & Taylor Co. 1926. $10.

Reviewed by HENRY SEIDEL CANBY

I AM a citizen of Cornwall only by self-adoption, a walker of its wooded roads, a summer idler on its hill-top pastures, a dallier in old cemeteries and beneath lilac and pine. I can pretend to no scholarship in Cornwalliana and do not know whether the Reverend Gold, with whom (and England) the town made peace in 1783, was the noble Christian his tombstone still proclaims him, or "unguarded in the direction of obscenity" as a contemporary avers, and therefore quite unworthy of the salary he fought for so pertinaciously while the Revolution was being managed, with scarcely greater disturbance to Cornwall, elsewhere. But I know a meaty volume when I see it. To me, until I read this book (and an earlier history by the Reverend Gold's grandson) Cornwall was just so many pleasant valleys, white-housed and many-streamed, with still pleasanter hilltops looking northward to the Taconics, sweet with fern and bright with cinquefoil or daisy. But what a town is revealed in these pages! What a country Connecticut once was! What congestion of life and thinking on its thin soil, what a knobbed existence, cracking and breaking into sparks, what power and prepotence in its people!

The Reverend Starr is wise. He sees that a little community may be a roadway down time as worth the following as the broader avenues of history. The course is narrow and crooked but the perspective is close and the visibility high. His history begins with Annals in which, year by year, the fall of Napoleon, the Reverend Gold's recovery of his impounded ram, the discovery of Uranus, the Atridean tragedies of Dudleytown (above Dark Entry near Hardscrabble), the Crimean war, and the arrival of the first train on the two strips of iron stretched past West Cornwall, take their place in one broad measure, where the little event proclaims its indubitable life beside the great happening. Cornwall moves and the world moves beside it.

* * *

And it appears that except for war and revolution (our Bloody Mountain is named for a fight that never came off) pretty much all that has happened in the great world outside has happened at least once, and with emphasis, in this little town. Microcosm repeats the macrocosm. Great men and great movements were born here, husbands and wives went through every pace of the marital drama (see the section of biographies)—courage, honesty, comedy, tragedy, there is an example for every category. Abookiah, the Hawaiian savage, was found weeping on the steps of Yale College because he saw no hope of an education, and was educated in Cornwall. Two Cherokees, sons of chiefs, ran off with the belles of Cornwall and brought to an end the first missionary school in America, whence light was being spread over the South Seas and Asia (there were other reasons for the closing, notably the winter climate, but miscegenation was the climax). How both men were murdered, and the ballad written of their adventures also belong to the story. There are other spicy items. Captain Gold, who hated "paper work" but was a good officer to his men in the Civil War, came back to Cornwall a broken man, built stone walls and planted those lines of elms the town takes pride in, and died a tramp in a sawmill. Photius Fiske, born on the island of Hydra, and a resident of Cornwall, was a friend of John Brown, got Congress to abolish flogging for seamen, was chaplain in the Navy, turned infidel and scandalously kept his pension, left his fortune to the poor, but the lawyers got it all. Matthew Lyon, the bound boy from Ireland, who was sold for a pair of stags (i. e., bulls), fought with Ethan Allan, went to Congress, broke the tie between Jefferson and Burr and elected the first Democratic president. "By the bulls that bought me," was his favorite oath, like Bagheera. There is the curious humor of Captain Jeffers, captain of a company of "Hell-Hounds" in the Revolution, Indian fighter, who writes to Cornwall from the far-off West of the Alleghenies—

> The curious sight of a man and woman both hanging on one gallows for the horrid crime of fornication, and the striking poetry made on the occasion is very entertaining.

Add the story of the Reverand Beriah Hotchkiss who prayed that he might not outlive his usefulness, and who after serving five towns was dismissed at the age of seventy-two. "His wife was named Thankful—"!

These are snippets merely. Steam heat (most appropriately) was invented in Cornwall, the scientific teaching of agriculture began there, missionaries, spread over the East, called Cornwall home, and some of the meanest rascals in print stayed in Cornwall and are recorded in this book. It was a great race, crabbed yet powerful.

"The History of Cornwall" was not written to supply material for fiction, though it may be highly recommended as a rich source for novelists, dramatists, and short-story writers, yet it is clear from his sub-title that the Reverend Starr was well aware that in his assemblage of human documents from two centuries he was presenting New England by typical example. I have not been just to his method, for in orderly fashion, by categories, he presents in five hundred pages the roads, rivers, trade, education, religion, and biography of this town which, though reasonably happy and quite without fame, has had so much history. Yet I suspect that town histories should be written like his, with an emphasis on the human, and a bold disregard of the "flow" and "evolution" which supposedly take place in nations, yet are so suspiciously absent in towns. The author says in his Preface, "I have tried to be accurate, but do not guarantee my facts, as they are not of my manufacture," a statement which historians of more important periods might copy; and he continues: "Every reader will wonder why some things are here written and others omitted. He is welcome to guess," the candor of which I commend to the scientific chroniclers of this age of research who do not always know why they include, or that they have omitted.

Herodotus wrote in this fashion, and I am not sure that the town of Cornwall, typical of New England, typical of human nature, when peculiar circumstances of breeding, environment, and education force out its infinite variety, is not as worthy of consideration as some of his little towns of long ago. Cornwall will leave only stone walls for ruins, though the North Church just restored is perfect of its impermanent kind, but its hills will remain, and its prepotent blood has already gone out over America and the far seas.

Deadlock

LITTLE PITCHERS. By ISA GLENN. New York: Alfred A. Knopf. 1927. $2.50.

Reviewed by ROBERT B. MACDOUGALL

MISS GLENN'S characters grope in a semi-darkness of misunderstanding and shallow selfishness; they struggle towards happiness, but there is no road obvious enough for their limited intelligences to follow. In her first novel, "Heat," Miss Glenn dealt with stagnation and disintegration in the Philippines. Her second, "Little Pitchers," changes the scene but not the mood, revealing, against a background of China and Brazil, the futility of attempted reconciliation between a stupid though well-intentioned husband and a wife who had been born with the instincts of a high-grade prostitute. The life of these two, as they travel from country to country at the bidding of opportunity (the husband, a civil engineer, has some vague connection with the building of railroads), is one long discontent, one ceaseless quarrel. They have no settled home, no plan of life, no community of interest—all is domestic chaos. As a recorder of this incompatibility, their son, the little pitcher of the title, is brought into the narrative by Miss Glenn. Truly he does have the big ears of the proverb, a comprehension that, as he grows older, destroys his happiness by its acuteness; and through his constantly widening perceptions the life of father and mother is given to the reader. Such is Miss Glenn's daring scheme for a novel, a scheme that she carries through with brilliant success. But "Little Pitchers" is not for the lover of sunshine and weak tea in literature. It is for those who cherish honesty, and insight, and skill.

Michael, the little boy whose ears and eyes are precociously retentive, is a character of infinite pathos. We see him as the prototype of all children in like circumstances, unnecessary, unwanted, forever misunderstanding and misunderstood. As we watch him at the age of four and follow him through the next ten years we feel small wonder that he is slightly inhuman, that he worries about cobweb problems, and has no interest in the normal pursuits of boyhood. But in this strangeness of Michael it seems as if Miss Glenn has made her only serious error: we do not sympathize with or understand his desire to get some message, *the word* he calls it, at first from the moon, then from God, then from himself, some *word* that shall solve the mysteries he sees around him. There is much tiresome talk about this *word*. His character is strong enough to do without it, for, although not the most important in "Little Pitchers," it is responsible for the novel's unusual effectiveness.

In addition to the father, mother, and son the book has much to offer. There are, for example, the three girls who live near Michael's home in Rio, three girls who surely would be fit companions for the young savages in "The Constant Nymph." And again, in these three, we have the *motif* of the little pitchers. But character is not all, for we are blessed with an abundance of shrewd and effective writing when Miss Glenn sketches in the backgrounds for the plot. Rio de Janeiro is as real to us as the room in which we read, and Lages, a camp set high among the inland mountains of Brazil, gives a vivid, exotic setting for a deftly insinuating passage that will repel some readers and delight others.

Throughout, Miss Glenn is skilful; she builds drama subtly and with a sure power. This novel, furthermore, is a proof of her originality. To be sure, it is easy to find minor faults, but we are safe in saying that no fundamental weakness exists to drag down her future achievement. "Little Pitchers" should be read by all who appreciate excellence in the novel. But let the devotees of the polite and the conventional beware; they will be just a little shocked.

Another Test Case

THE KAYS. By MARGARET DELAND. New York: Harper & Bros. 1926. $2.

Reviewed by LEE WILSON DODD

IN reviewing "Iowa Interiors" by Ruth Suckow, some weeks ago, I entered a caveat against a method of writing fiction which I was pleased to call "unemphatic naturalism." My objection to it, in a word, was that the more perfectly it was done the more certainly it would end by putting you to sleep. Now few things are better than sleep, as Sancho Panza noted, but it is not precisely the function of the arts to induce it.

Mrs. Deland's new novel is an excellent example of an utterly different tendency—a way of story telling that seems to me even more vicious. "The Kays," frankly, is a pacifist tract disguised as fiction. It is moral and social propaganda. It is a sugar-coated pill.

Well—why not? Why shouldn't a woman who has many seductive and popular qualities as a writer employ her talents to forward whatever cause she wholeheartedly believes in? What else has Bernard Shaw been up to for all of forty years? If we encourage him to write tracts in the guise of farces and comedies, heaping praise and money upon him, what right have we to lecture Mrs. Deland when she produces a tract in the guise of a novel?

The one reply is, that it is the function of criticism to be discerning and intelligent in respect to the arts. Unhappily, criticism has to be carried on by critics, who—in spite of rumors to the contrary—are human, and therefore subject to flaws of insight and lapses from pure reason. The field af æsthetics, moreover, is one of the trickiest of terrains. The scenery is exquisite, it is surrounded by delectable mountains, but the ground under foot is very uncertain, filled with pitfalls and shifting sands. Skulls and thighbones of the strayed and lost are lying about and add little to one's sense of security. Nevertheless, earlier adventurers have found paths through this lovely wilderness, which a quick eye and cautious foot may retrace with comparative safety. And one of these paths leads close to, yet cleanly away from the Didactic Swamp. All round the borders of this swamp footsteps may be discerned pointing inward, but few indeed point outward! Many critics have noted this fact, and most of them are convinced it is rather significant.

The trouble seems to be that when you write a novel to teach mankind a specific lesson you are no longer a free creative agent. You inhibit the depths and go to work only with the thin conscious top-layer of your personality. You foresee everything in advance, you grow crafty, you plan and contrive. You devise a situation which will illustrate and enforce, as you fondly believe, your moral. Then

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you take certain sticks of wood and whittle out the necessary puppets to fit into your situation, and you begin pushing them about into prearranged combinations. And the strange, jealous, and invisible gods and demons of Life and Art grow offended because you have not trusted them. They refuse to aid you. No sparks descend from above or surge upward from below. Nothing kindles—no matter how you rub your conscious wits and purposes together. What began as a contraption ends as a contraption, and the harder you try the less you accomplish.

It is so with this present novel. All Mrs. Deland's spiritual fervor and sincerity go for nothing, because they have been misapplied. She has not moved us either to a more passionate or a more tranquil and philosophic awareness of life; she has merely irritated us by a piece of special pleading. Here is the story——

Agnes Kay, a New England girl, is living in Mrs. Deland's favorite Old Chester, the wife of a certain Major Kay, an affluent ex-soldier of the Mexican and Seminole wars who is engaged in running a lottery. The action takes place before, during, and after the Civil War. Agnes is an uncompromising idealist, a born reformer far in advance of her times. She has one son, Arthur, whom—as our behaviorists would say—she is *conditioning* to be exactly like herself. Her husband, usually called Beau Kay, is not really a bad fellow—just the average sensual and rather stupid man of his period, plus an occasional flash of mysticism which Mrs. Deland has carefully planted in him for a special purpose of her own. Hence these occasional flashes —as when the gallant Major addresses a trellis covered with morning glories as "the Holy Ghost" —are not particularly convincing.

Agnes, when the story begins, is living in the house with her husband, but has broken off marital relations with him. She announced to him on the day Arthur was born that she would never bear him another child. A letter had arrived that very day disclosing some dereliction. Then, one day, while Arthur was still a baby, a crazy woman was brought to the house. The Major was away on a business trip. Agnes took the crazy woman into her home, placed her in an attic chamber and cared for her with her own hands, untiringly, until the woman's death many years later, letting no one but herself ever enter the room. On the Major's return, she explained merely that this crazy woman was a friend of hers. The Major, rather surprisingly, but very conveniently for the story, seems to have accepted this explanation.

Beau Kay is an Episcopalian, as he feels a gentleman should be. Agnes, however, has joined a strict religious sect, the True Followers, who are nonresistants. She brings Arthur up to be a True Follower. He signs their Pledge for Peace, as a young boy, and because he lives up to it by frequently turning the other cheek he soon gets the reputation of being a sissy and a coward. Beau Kay, who otherwise pays little attention to the boy, is incensed that his cranky wife should have turned *his* son—the son of a soldier!—into a mollycoddle.

Next door to the Kays there is a lovely, bouncing widow with two rough-and-tumble boys and a beautiful little girl, Lois, the bigness of whose heart is supposed to compensate for the smallness of her intellect. Judged by her words and actions she seems little above the status of high-grade moron, and to do intelligence justice, Arthur's mother seems the one person to recognize this fact. Certainly Arthur does not! As he comes to young manhood, he loves Lois and Lois dotes on him. Her brothers say Arthur is a coward, and Lois believes he *is* a coward—but as she feels he can't help it she only loves him the more. Then, the proper date and posture of events having arrived, Fort Sumter is fired on.

When Beau Kay himself finances, commands, and drills a company of volunteers, his own son will not join. He will not fight for his country. He tells his father that war is "hellish idocy." He is right. But no one in Old Chester agrees with him, except his mother and the small band of True Followers. Even Lois doesn't agree with him, but she feels so sorry for him that she engages herself to him all the same. Then her mother, whose two brave sons are at the front, indignantly carries Lois off with her to Washington and forbids her even to correspond with Arthur. Lois dutifully obeys and suffers. The years pass. Her brothers are both killed. The war at last is over. Lois returns to Old Chester, and so too does Arthur. During the last years of the war he has so far compromised with conscience as to do civilian work for his government. But he returns a slandered man, accused of cheating his country's soldiers. He will not deny the accusation, not even to Lois. He is too brave, too upright, too hurt and proud. So Lois thinks he is not only a coward but a thief—and therefore she runs away with him and marries him. She is so terribly sorry for him that all that doesn't matter. He is an outcast, so he needs her love more than ever.

Of course, Arthur does not realize that Lois believes him to be a coward and a thief; he thinks she understands everything. This is perhaps a supreme example of the blindness of love.

Well, at last it all comes out. Beau Kay gives Arthur the necessary hint; Arthur interrogates Lois; Lois admits that she married him because she thought him a dishonest weakling in great need of her affection. Arthur goes out blindly into the night. It is snowing hard. And just then the crazy woman upstairs (had you forgoten her?) dies in the arms of devoted Agnes. The strain is too much for Agnes at last, and for the first time in her life she calls for help. Beau Kay dashes up the stairs and into the attic room. One look at the dead face, and he sees it all. "Good God!" he exclaims. For once, many years ago, that poor crazy woman, now at rest, had been a lively young trollop—and his mistress! He says as much to the doctor:

"A trollop, she was, Willy, when I first knew her, poor thing! I don't want you to think worse of me than you have to. But my wife—The Holy Ghost, William, the Holy Ghost!"

So it was that Beau Kay came at last to appreciate the silent bravery and devotion of his wife. And when Arthur had thought things over, out there in the snow, he returned to Lois. It is a tearful and a happy ending.

If in retelling this plot I have been rude enough to make fun of it, I can only plead in extenuation that it satirizes itself; and in the long run I venture to think that Mrs. Deland will agree with me, since she is a woman of character and brains, and has often proved herself a charming, persuasive, and artistic writer. I have sufficiently indicated above what I believe to be the cause of her present misfortune. It will still be a misfortune even if, as is only too possible, the book should prove to be a popular success.

Novel Devils

BEFORE THE BOMBARDMENT. By OSBERT SITWELL. New York: George H. Doran. 1926. $2.50.

Reviewed by LEONARD BACON

MR. SITWELL'S novel is much too fine a performance to win at once the admiration it deserves. One critic has already predicted permanence for it, and if there were any particular use in being oracular, I could do a little prophesying myself. But a work of such combined solidity and lightness can do what is necessary on its own account. It is full of power, and it will make its way irrespective of critical vaporings, for it is the kind of book which finds an audience not summoned by trumpets.

I do not know Mr. Sitwell's other works. And it is fair to state that when I began "Before the Bombardment" I was in the frame of mind of the man who said he never did like Thackeray till he read one of his books. I was not prepared to be pleased, and in fact was hunting for certain things toward which I was working up a studious hostility. Instead of those things I found perhaps the most curious study of maiden ladies in existence, and a work of extraordinary intellectual elaboration written in a brilliant yet unassuming and naturally poetic style.

"Before the Bombardment" is the history of the life and opinions of Miss Teresa Bramwell—a paid companion, how she was formed by Miss Fansharp her first employer, and how she found love and grief and defeat with Miss Collier-Floodgaye (the e is important) in the far away Edwardian times when German cruisers never shot up provincial hotels. And in short the book is the post-war looking at the pre-war with irony, sympathy, detachment, and discernment.

It would seem that the love affair of two old maids might be slender diet—hardly Lesbian enough for modern tastes. So it would be, if it were not for brilliant understanding of states of mind, for the glorious writing, and for the way in which a meagre episode is loaded with symbolic implication until it is able to express the tragedy, defeat, and imbecility of an entire generation.

Mr. Sitwell has penetrated very strange places in this book. He has yoked reason and intuition to his chariot, and they have drawn him safe over ground which if not enchanted is infested by brand-new jinns and novel devils, authentic if not spectacular. There is bitter poignancy in the situation. Miss Collier-Floodgaye hires Miss Bramwell, because, in her need to escape from herself, she must have an ambassadress to smooth the path to natural human contacts. But what Miss Bramwell needs is the precise opposite, not liberty but servitude, to be the single, the engrossing element in the life of the served. And her jealousy of the old lady is in direct proportion to the latter's burning need of social contact. One wishes to go out, and the other to take in. It is just as tragic as any other spiritual clash, with the added horror that it is agreed by the world that old maids are uninteresting into the bargain.

But they aren't uninteresting seen through Mr. Sitwell's lens. They become part of nature, live things, moving against the whalebacked seas, or the scooped and tumbled moors behind Newborough. On the esplanade they are watched by a thousand scandal-mongers. Their names are tossed across every tea-table by avid connoisseurs. The mystery of Miss Collier-Floodgaye's past, the mystery of her present, of her future are the subjects of pitiless speculation in a town inhabited by the infirm, the superannuated, and the ineffective. And it all ends when Miss Collier-Floodgaye's fortune goes to the next of kin instead of to Miss Bramwell for whom it was intended, because Miss Bramwell was guilty of an omission, of which the iron code of companions and her own inclination compelled her to be guilty.

* * *

Strange as it may seem to say so, the book is like tremendous music wrought on some gross or common theme. Glück is said to have snatched one of his finest motives from the dull roar of a starving Viennese crowd. Mr. Sitwell has developed composition from the scarcely audible sigh of a woman trained by dieting to suppress every natural impulse. But for all that his book is full of organic and profound harmonies, and his counterpoint is flawless. When he seems to be wandering from his theme, he is only becoming more relevant. And the book has a wholeness and a completeness that only the most thoughtful artists achieve.

Paradoxically this is perhaps its weakest quality. That wholeness and completeness is perhaps too obvious. Something of the odious thoroughness of a mathematical proof inheres in the book, as if Mr. Sitwell fancied (what I do not believe he fancies at all) that thought and intuition would carry him through. The mind does other things beside rendering a reason and choosing a possibility. To the reviewer it seems that a certain coolness of detachment has in some degree frosted the glass through which Mr. Sitwell shows us an elaborate picture of Hell, simply conceived by Fra Angelico and complexly executed by the strange collaboration of Goya and Cézanne.

In a recent address before the British Society of Authors, Mr. W. B. Maxwell made some amusing references to the fees earned for their masterpieces by great writers of the past. The first was to the case of John Milton:

"He sold 'Paradise Lost' for £5," he said. "But on reflection, I thought afterwards that I should have done better if I had instanced the case of Oliver Goldsmith and the 'Vicar of Wakefield.'

"Goldsmith entrusted the manuscript of the novel to Johnson as to one 'in the know,' asking him, no doubt, to do the best he could. Johnson bustled out with the copy in his hands and sold the thing outright to a bookseller for £60. Think of it! No attempt to reserve the copyright, to secure possession of subsidiary rights, dramatization, translation, serialization. Films and broadcasting, of course, did not exist. He defended his conduct of affairs afterwards by saying that, 'Why, sir, it was a sufficient price when it was sold, for then the fame of Goldsmith had not been elevated. . . . Later on, to be sure, it was accidentally worth more money.' Imbecile!"

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The Founder of the Jesuits

IGNATIUS LOYOLA. By PAUL VAN DYKE. New York: Charles Scribner's Sons. 1926. $3.50.

Reviewed by ERNEST SUTHERLAND BATES

IN an age which has lost belief in saintliness and even doubts whether the mediæval virtues of poverty, chastity, and obedience were ever virtues at all, it is rather unfortunate that outside of the Catholic Church so little actual knowledge of the saints exists. Some familiarity with St. Augustine, St. Francis, St. Thomas Aquinas, St. Theresa, or St. Ignatius might certainly, one would think, be at least more beneficial than an intimate acquaintance with Nero, Cæsar Borgia, or Richard III. Yet the American college student and the American public come nearer the latter than the former. From this point of view the admirably careful and scholarly life of Ignatius Loyola by Paul Van Dyke is particularly to be welcomed. And perhaps even more from another point of view. Less than a century ago so eminent a Christian as Charles Kingsley regarded the Jesuits as virtual emissaries of Hell, and even today—despite the fact that Jesuit missionaries established the noblest religious record in the whole of American history—it is probable that in most American households the Jesuits are still regarded with especial suspicion as pledged to devious ways of craft and cunning. Professor Van Dyke's work is calculated to dispel this illusion at least as regards the founder of the order.

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Ignatius Loyola is shown to us as a direct and simple, even naïve, soul of typical mediæval cast, subject to mystic visions, utterly unworldly, devoted to the service of God and his neighbors as he understood it; to these qualities he joined an iron will and, although of naturally conservative disposition, an exceptional ability to learn from experience. Brought up in the half illiterate, frivolous life of a young nobleman and soldier, he first became seriously interested in religion at about the age of thirty while convalescing from a serious mood. There followed those agonies of conscience and attempts to merit salvation by extreme austerities that are so usual a feature of religious conversion. But to these there came to be added an intense desire for knowledge. After a pilgrimage to Jerusalem, he spent some ten years in the study of theology and other subjects in various Spanish universities and in the University of Paris. It was at the latter institution that he first organized the Company of Jesus among a small group of his fellow-students (although the name itself did not come until later); the purpose of the company was originally no more definite than to undertake a pilgrimage and to "help souls." The former aim was prevented by war, but, after Ignatius had preceded them to Italy and opened up the way, his nine comrades joined him there, devoting themselves to itinerant preaching in different cities of the peninsula. It was from such slender beginnings that there was to develop the strongest organization within the Catholic Church, the organization largely responsible for stemming the tide of Protestantism in the next century.

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After overcoming great hostility and repeated charges of heresy, Ignatius succeeded in obtaining the sanction of the Pope for his new order, and thenceforth it grew rapidly until by his death it had representatives throughout western Europe, in India, and in the New World. The Company of Jesus differed from the earlier monastic orders in several respects: they wore no distinctive garb, practiced fewer austerities, and devoted themselves more to good works than to contemplation, these works consisting of preaching, the care of the poor and sick, the founding of orphan asylums, above all, the establishment of colleges. Yet contemplation was not forgotten; in fact, the "Spiritual Exercises" of Ignatius probably form the best guide to the contemplative life to be found in western religious literature.

Professor Van Dyke may be pardoned if enthusiasm for the many-sided accomplishments and character of his hero lead almost to a denial of defect. The picture as he has drawn it, with the aid of Loyola's own writings, remains on the whole thoroughly convincing,—the picture of a man at once very great and very lovable.

The Bowling Green

"East Side, West Side"

ONE evening last autumn I sat up late reading the galley proofs of a novel. It was written by a man who knows New York as few writers do—not merely as a wildly picturesque backdrop; he knows it as plumbers, architects, engineers, bartenders and bargees and building superintendents know it. And reading his powerful, melodramtic, and sometimes crude story, I came unexpectedly upon a sudden passage, twenty pages long, where he did what so few writers ever dare to do. He let go. Like a plumber gone berserk in some subcellar of complicated pipes and valves he threw down his tools, ran out in the street, and shouted the long repressed magnificence of his heart.

It lifted me upright in my chair. At that moment the lights went out (a thunderstorm had been rolling round) and I hustled wildly to find candles so I could go on. "Here, here," I said anxiously to myself, "this won't do, this is a man really speaking out in meeting."

Felix Riesenberg's twenty page dithyramb, in the course of his novel "East Side, West Side," suddenly flings discretion overboard and vents his glorious angry excitement about New York. It isn't pretty. It's outrageous; it's fierce and beautiful, sometimes as vulgar as a tabloid newspaper, and will be a shock to gentle readers. It's a flare of magnesium powder (or whatever that stuff is they take flashlights by) in the divine and simian comedy of our tall bedlam.

I quote you a little of it:

Poets have never been able to grasp you. Plunderers cannot ravage you; you absorb them and their plunder. Murderers kill and escape, losing everything, including their publicity. Bishops scold you, and stay. Cardinals condemn you, and solicit funds. Rabbis and cantors love you. Visitors patronize your towers. Radicals are not one-tenth as radical as you. Conservatives are wild philanderers compared with the solidity of your foundations. *Up, up, up,* you shoot; your views alone are forming a philosophy.

Poisoners, stick-ups, solicitors, cowards, firemen, grammarians, hucksters, advertisers, experts, presidents, vice-presidents, directors, secretaries, door-men, shoe polishers, boot-lappers, agents, scriveners, C.P.A.'s, commissioners of deeds, notaries, congressmen, aldermen, mayors, and commissioners, all ride in motor cars. Your streets are narrowing and must be widened; your views are widening and must be narrowed.

Reporters cover you, yet you are never covered.

Gray postmen carry expectant stuff, tragedy, joy, despair; dunning letters written without humor. The Board of Estimate and Apportionment estimates the load you can carry without sinking, and apportions it among the faithful. No one laughs in public.

No one complains at filthy subway toilets, lack of street urinals, lack of conveniences. Moral city. City of the constipation of freedom. City of unmentionables, of the improper. A perfect lady might perish; the city saves its blushes. City of uncomfortable comfort stations. Absent-minded city of unconscious revelations.

Sounds, words, ideas, are barred. You switch off the talkers who blurt out truth. But the sights, ah, the generous city of sights, of turbulent color, of form, of figure, of grace and motion, city of disconcerting shows, momentarily free. City of pulled-up shades, of pulled-up skirts, of shimmies, scanties, camisoles, half hose and no hose. City of hot meals, stews, brews, and distillations. City of an occasional monocle. City of commissions, of the fancy, of victorious victims; city of adumbrations, of joints and jointures, of firms and flaccids.

City revolving in the wide penumbra of undetermined virtues. City of social amenities and feuds. City of those who are in and out. City of ghosts for hire, and of free confessions, of wonderful simplicity, of jails, of short-changers, of bread lines and dead lines and of smart lines of chatter. City of citations, of gilt edges, transfusions, transmutations, transformations, transfers, and denials. Squeezers, leeches, spies, lizards, loafers, cohabit with those who don't mind, in the city of many, many, many queer couples and lovely couples who keep their doors locked day and night.

Nuts, crackpots, and the plain insane make contracts, contacts, and connections. City of statutory offenses and of the common law, of permits and taboos.

City of evils and errors, social, spiritual, and profane. Naughty city, mealy-mouthed city; indifferent city, forgetful, mercifully forgetful. Court of perpetual arguments and contentions, of exceptions, incompetent, irrelevant, and immaterial. Habeas-corpus city; steel filing-cabinet of human depositions, affidavits, testaments, contrabands; town of three balls, badgers, skunks; city of occasional scruples, of dancing ancients, of unmarriageable mannequins. C.O.D. city; city of the schools of etiquette, of billiard academies and barber colleges, of cults, reformations, prosperity; of smokers, hop-heads, finks, dreamers, manicurists. Swirling city of endless dust, papers, and gases. City of conveyances, of sudden cancellations.

City of the Holy Eucharist, the Holy Grail, the true belief. *Eili, eili!* City of ponderous proportions, of infinite details, of long lists of members paying dues. City of evening dress. City of shirt fronts and vests. City of telephones, tales, research, shadowing, prying, trying. City of flotations, sinkings, X-rays, praises, discoveries, losses, and recoveries. Many, many things are in the city for which we make excuses. Flat feet, flats, escalators, atoms, electrons, irons, rays, darts, molecules, luck, hunches, tragic, tragic strivings; Valhalla of office boys, bank messengers, pet dogs, negations, circumstantial things; autographic city. City of chastisements, flagellations, mortifications, squassations; ascetic city. City of flop houses, voodoos; nostalgic city, of unintentional effects.

City of time-clocks, of chimes, and churns, and treadmills. City of physical elevations. City of apprehensions, pick-ups, and of thrilling possibilities. Home of valets, varlets, vampires, vultures, virtues. City of a million mirrors, actual and unseen.

City of great companies. Atlas Tack Company, National Noodle Company, Standard Oil Company, Active Metal Ceiling Company; Independent Salt Company. City of gusto, imagination, verve, nerve, thrilling, imponderable, miraculous city of endless complications and rewards. City of Gopher Gangs, city of symphonies, of practitioners, of clearing houses, of generous impulses.

The city needs help, the papers print wants. Nothing ever satisfies the city, it is always out of work, out of funds, tired, sick, hungry, and lazy. It is filled with most of the world's admitted millionaires.

Arguments, warnings, frights, drives, shouts, and revivalists; the city has known them all. Its numbers continue to increase; new subways are always building or being planned. Avatistic city of anarchists assembled under law and of unsocial socialists.

Polyandrous city. Mormon city. Homosexual city. City of solid urns and hollow heads. City of clanging radiators, of inhibitions, of supine superintendents.

This is the folk-lore of a post-historic city.

City of stalking-horses, decoys, lodges, medals, ribbons, scapegoats, scarecrows, and of many fabrications.

City of marshals and evictions, of imprisonments and releases. Colored city of Harlem, of Garvey the Emperor, of black belts and of West Indian independents. One Hundred and Twenty-fifth Street—the Black Broadway. City of slaves, of serfs, of bookkeepers, and dive-keepers. City of expensive poor houses. Great disdainful city of gefültefisch. Lively town of matzoth. Observer of conventions, lickspittler of styles, reader of Beau Nash. Dutiful city of the weeks, and days, dedicated to purchasing of merchandise.

Huge metropolis of abattoirs, of cattle coming in on cars, of watered milk and water-hardened butter. City of inspectors, active and retired. City of apoplectic merchant princes, merchant dukes, earls, lords, knights, and baronets. City where your money is never given back. City of turnstiles, of tortures, of saxophones, of soda fountains. City in which young men linger till they are old. Nice city for the successful to foregather in and admire each other without stint. Alternating magnet and ejector of commuters. Cage of the ego; aviary of perch climbers; exchange of solicitudes, repulses, turn-downs. Unexpurgated city of replenishments.

Dear old city of "rapid transit" tubes running through its vitals; leaky intestines, filled with slow-motion citizens in process of digestion. City of expensive flowers, of expensive suburbs and expensive golf clubs, of expensive children and expensive joys. City wherein there is no room to die and all must live with care. City of rented homes and leased happiness. City of dogs on leashes, of carmine smiles, of pungent perfumes, warranted to attract attention. City of very few attractive knees in sight.

City wherein philosophers are stupid and fools are wise. City of unknown monuments. Beautiful, fiery, flamboyant, flaring city of freaks. City of parades, of marches, of memories. City of the first class. *À la carte* city. City of sinful Samaritans. City of prosperous beggars, of last rewards.

City of Vanderbilts, Astors, Goulds, Van Horns, selling their houses and moving into flats. City of social registers without warmth. City of rubbernecks. Rough city, tough city. City strictly Kosher. City of swamis, of floorwalkers, of bargain sales. City of cat furs, of reducing, of introducing by induction, of flirting and mashing and smashing. City of many, many things of which the half cannot be told. Great night school of folly. City of silent laughter, of sudden tears.

Greater than London, greater than Paris, greater than Chicago. Greater than Pekin, greater than Rome, greater than Jerusalem, Babylon, and Tyre, all combined. City of odalisques working in stores, of seraglios seeking for sultans, of tired old women scrubbing offices by night.

City wrought in flame. City of arguments unending. City of moon faces, city of beauty, city of twilight babies. City of evasions, city of catastrophes, city of shows. City of terminals, city of endings, city of departure, of entries and clearances, city of the last attempt. City of wandering, homeless men and women. City wherein no one knows whether he is coming or going.

City of enchantments, of disenfranchisement, of differentiation, of integration, of hypnosis, of garroters, of experiments. Great, glorious, patriotic city, giving its canes to crippled soldiers. Fairy city in those magic hours of the passing night; the pause before the dawn.

Yes, you will say to yourself—especially if you like to come to quick conclusions about things—this is queer stuff. A brief extract cannot do justice to the extraordinary ferocity, ribaldry, and vision of this twenty-page outcry. It seems to me one of the great poems about New York; and on those pages Riesenberg gets a fraternal wave from two men who would specially have understood—Whitman and Rabelais.

CHRISTOPHER MORLEY

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Books of Special Interest

East Indian Annals

BRITISH INDIA. From Queen Elizabeth to Lord Reading. By AN INDIAN MAHOMEDAN. New York: Isaac Pitman & Sons. 1926. $8.50.

Reviewed by HARENDRANATH MAITRA

THE readers of this work are supposed to know the political situation of India from the days of Queen Elizabeth to the Indian Viceroy, Lord Reading, who has just retired.

It is tragic to see how the three hundred millions of people in the course of time came under the political and military domination of a few millions of English people. Certainly, India lost her creative genius during the latter part of the Mahomedan rule. Otherwise, how could a nation which has given birth to great kings, military geniuses and statesmen, like Asoka, Chandragupta, Shivaji, Akbar, and Todurfull, and women rulers like Rani of Jhansi and Ahalyabai and several others, fall into the hands of a handful of Englishmen?

A small trading company, during the reign of Queen Elizabeth, laid the foundation of the British Empire in India. The history in the opening chapters of the book is to a certain extent trustworthy, but apparently the author does not know of, or perhaps has not given, the awful tragedies that happened to the handicrafts of India, and to the people that carrieid on this trade; how ruthlessly the native industries, once the joy of the whole world, were destroyed and how the English conquest killed all initiative in the peoples of India. A political historian with a limited horizon always writes without a broad vision of things. He sees only the facts that suit his purpose. He has very little imagination.

It is an open fact that all early traders and the early governors fomented all the disputes and allied themselves with the ruler; or they ruled as they fancied. Surely the author knows the treatment of Warren Hastings to the Begums of Oudh and how he played with the wealth of India. It is singular that we find in "British India" so little of that striking and unforgettable event.

We are disappointed in the lack of justice in the treatment not only of the Indian National Congress but of its authors—the makers of Indian Nationality; Banerjee or Gokhale, Tyabjee or Gandhi. They have been more or less agitators according to the author's opinion. His reference to the revolutionary movement in India is both scathing and unjustified. Certainly, all revolutions are terrible and to be condemned. But condemnation, alone, is no cure.

What is the history of the growth of the English Parliament? How did the people get the Magna Charta? Did not the Barons join with their open scabbards, meet King John, forcing him to give his signature to the great Statute of Liberty? The rulers, as a general thing, unless there is some sort of threat—peaceful or revolutionary—never yield to the wishes of the people.

What is the history of American Independence? Was American freedom an easy conquest? If Washington had failed in his mission, he would have been hung as a traitor. Would it have been natural for the American people to have taxation without representation? What is the demand of India, then, to the British?

In India, Britain rules by the policy of "divide and rule." There are generally speaking, two large sections of people—the Hindu and the Mahomedan. What happens is this: there are many prize posts. Sometimes the government favors the one in preference to the other. Once an English governor broke this tradition by the startling announcement at a public meeting that he had two wives, one, a Hindu and the other, a Mahomedan. Of course that was symbolical according to the tradition of the mystic element of the British race! But the people, alas, took him to task as a bigamist.

The truth is, that the British and the Indian, through these political struggles, are together building up the Indian nationality of the future. The British, however, show its black face in ruthless massacring of the Indian people, as at Amritsar, but the "devil is the other face of God."

The author has failed to clearly understand the significance of the struggle between the British and the Indian. He has endeavored, we fear, to whitewash the British administration at the cost of Indian Nationalism.

Can It Ever Be Told?

WHITE WATERS AND BLACK. By GORDON MACCREAGH. New York: The Century Co. 1926. $4.

Reviewed by KERMIT ROOSEVELT.

I AM an admirer of well chosen titles. "Now It Can Be Told" appealed to me as a happy selection, and Gordan MacCreagh might well have called his book "Can It Ever Be Told?" Not that the title he has given it is not an excellent one, but there is much in Mr. MacCreagh's book that the average man would think twice about committing to print, and then decide against so doing.

In most expeditions off the beaten track there arises a certain amount of friction between the members. This is so even when the leader has much experience behind him and has chosen his companions carefully. Be he never so tactful, some member may prove very different in the wilds than he was in civilization.

Apparently in the case of Mr. MacCreagh's associates, but two of them were qualified by age or temperament or experience to undertake such a journey. The director had never been off for thirty years, and none of the others excepting the author, had had any experience whatever off the beaten track.

The supplies with which this party, heralded in the newspapers as "the best equipped expedition ever to leave New York," set out were inadequate in the essentials and hopelessly superabundant and ill-assorted in the non-essentials. There were nine Americans and such as did not have one typewriter had two. To cross the most difficult sort of country where transportation was hard to come by at any price, the containers they had had built for their goods weighed forty-two pounds empty! Medical supplies of the most obvious sort were wofully lacking, and the canned food had been selected in abysmal ignorance of future needs.

All of these accounts of shortcomings and disasters afford interesting reading to the initiated and valuable data for the tyro who has thoughts of undertaking work of a similar nature. Whether their value in this line offsets the disturbance they must create among the various "expedicionistas" discussed, is a moot question. Mr. MacCreagh at all events gives his fellow members all credit for courage and determination, even if both are misguided.

The first part of the book acquires its chief interest from the frank detailing of the above mentioned difficulties. It does, however, give us some amazingly good descriptions; first of these is the author's account of shooting the rapids in the upper stretches of the Rio Bopi. Then there is an excellent sketch of life at the little jungle outpost of Rurrenabaque and the component elements that go to form its population.

The expedition sets off nine strong, but one by one they drop out to return to civilization, until there are but two left. Mr. MacCreagh is surely a man of courage and determination and the fact that he was unable to complete the expedition as it was originally planned in no way reflects upon him.

When he reached Manaos and general disbanding of the party took place, he might well have been excused for thinking twice before continuing up the River Negro. He had a badly infected leg, from which he had in vain endeavored to extract a grub that was causing all the trouble. His relation of the manner in which this grub was eventually conquered is amusing if gruesome.

At Manaos Mr. MacCreagh reoutfitted along lines dictated by bitter experience. To one who has not seen the country since the collapse of the reign of "Black Gold," the sorry state of affairs at present provided interesting reading. It seems a far cry from the gaudy wicked Manaos of twenty years ago to the drab little "one hoss" village of today. He set off up river accompanied by the two surviving members, and managed to win the good graces of the two local rulers who controlled affairs in the hinterland of the headwaters of the Rio Negro.

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Books of Special Interest

Poetic History

WORDS TO THE DEAF: An Historian Contemplates His Age. By GUGLIELMO FERRERO. Translated by Ben Ray Redman. New York: G. P. Putnam's Sons. 1926. $1.75.

Reviewed by T. V. SMITH

Author of "The Democratic Way of Life"

IT lies perhaps in the nature of the case that one who thinks his age wretched should also pity his fellow-men. And what must such an one think of himself—the joint-product of his age and of his fellows? Why, he must think himself very wise; otherwise he could not think his fellows fools. And what must we think of such an one? These and similar reflections temper the zeal with which initially I thought to praise this stimulating book. Since its first announcement in English, I had supposed this book written to the deaf—by one himself likewise afflicted. But the title is figurative. It is written to me and to all who believe in modern life. Nor is it written by one himself maimed—unless perchance only the blind speak to the deaf.

Such a book challenges a personal reaction and each reader will wish this privilege for himself. It is easy—*tu quoque*—to distrust him who distrusts everybody else. One never converts another, it is said, when the major premise of his argument is that the other is a fool. Certainly, however, this indictment against our time is ringing in its phrases. We have sought liberty, and achieved power. The twentieth century has used the power for self-destruction. But we insist upon the popular nature of the power that first destroyed our liberty and then itself. All governments, even current dictatorships, must rest upon an identification with the general will—that is upon nothingness. For the will of modern times, whether of men or of nations, is babel. It is dual, not to say multiple—which is to call it no will at all. It does not know what it wants; it wants contradictory things. Specifically, it wants both power and perfection. The woe of the world is this divided and ineffective will. It renders intelli- impotent, it renders power suicidal; is wealth into poverty through envy; rns contentment into dissatisfaction gh ambition. Such the diagnosis.

What is the prognosis? Where risk sets in much greater modesty prevails. But one does not brave the deaf merely to tell them how deaf they are—unless one be blind. Certainly Ferrero wishes to prescribe as well as to describe. There are two constructive lines of thought in the book, perhaps converging fully only beyond the periphery of this secular treatise. The first is confidence that great men—"the governing few"—can direct modern life largely as they elect. As the possibility of salvation is before them, so also the responsibility is theirs. Upon their sacrifice depends a hopeful future—yes, sacrifice. This is the other constructive suggestion. Since wants always grow geometrically while satisfaction progresses only arithmetically, asceticism is the only counsel of prudence. Since it will be our final word, why not take it as our initial wisdom? Capitalism has increased production only by stimulating consumption. Leisure must be strenuously consummatory so that the ensuing work may be profitably productive. We live our days for the sake of our nights, and lose our nights for the sake of our days. Nor does Socialism offer any hope of capitalistic regeneration, for it accepts precisely the same psychology. "Getting and spending, we lay waste our powers." Saint Francis! thou shouldst be living at this hour: the world hath need of thee! "This ascetic movement of the masses, which alone could dispossess capitalism, is still far away! Some day, however, it too will come."

Amid all this divination, what is the method that is employed? The prophetic method, of course. "Today only a prophet could divine what the forces are." In ignorance of the outcome we may yet for an hour be, or seem, free. In distrust of such a prophet we may still find hope if not gladness. The author paints the present gloomy and invites us to escape it by facing a future that seems to most moderns more gloomy still. However sweet renunciation may appear to some, it is not for most of us. Let us take our chance, instead, with those who dare to push ahead. Leave mediævalism to mediævalists, to historians, and to saints. As sober history of our time this book is weak, as scientific analysis it is weaker still. But as a work of imagination, now brooding, now glowing, it is a gem. The author invites us to judge him harshly by putting around himself the wrong mantle. The book is really poetry prophetically arrived at. Judged for what it is, it has beauty, it has pathos, it has daring, it has power. Its despondency is lyric; its renunciation romantic, its finality dramatic. Since, however, by the author's own admission, "history lends itself, with equal complaisance, to the previsions of optimism and to those of pessimism," I elect where gloom is gratis to dispense optimism at cut rates.

Ethnal Character

A STUDY OF NATIO-RACIAL MENTAL DIFFERENCES. By NATHANIEL D. MITTRON HIRSCH. Worcester, Mass.; Clark University. 1926.

Reviewed by ELLSWORTH HUNTINGTON

Yale University

ALMOST everyone except the specialist is sure to balk at a publication which bears a title so forbidding as this, but there is real meat in this little book. The fourth word in the title is indeed abominable. This is not merely because it sounds badly and is hard to pronounce, but because it painfully reminds the reviewer of his own vain attempts to find a word to express the same idea. The idea is that biologically, psychologically, and socially, the most important human unit is neither the so-called nation, nor the so-called race. Almost every nation consists of several races, each with its own physical, mental, and cultural characteristics; each so-called race is of highly mixed origin and displays great diversity of character from region to region. On the other hand the world contains many groups of people which are biologically more or less homogeneous and which live under a relatively uniform physical and social environment. These are the most fundamental human groups, aside perhaps from the family. We might speak of such groups as "stocks" and talk about the "stockial" characteristics of the people of Brittany, Wales, or Borneo, but "stockial" is a clumsy adjective, and the word "stock" already has too many other implications. Perhaps we might call such a group an "ethnos" and speak of ethnal characteristics. Dr. Hirsch has chosen to combine the words nation and race, and to speak of natio-races which show natio-racial mental differences. We hope that his idea will persist, but that his word will be replaced.

Although he has not yet found the right word, Dr. Hirsch has carried out an admirable bit of investigation. By exact experiment methods he is led to the conclusion that physical characteristics such as those by which Nordics, Alpines, and Mediterraneans are usually defined, have little or no connection with mental characteristics. On the other hand, when distinct natio-racial units or stocks like the Scotch, Polish Jews, Lithuanians, Pennsylvania Dutch, and French-Canadians, are compared, there is strong and consistent evidence of mental differences.

Dr. Hirsch begins his book by briefly reviewing the conclusions of other people as to mental differences among races. He then tells how he gave various types of mental tests to some 7,000 school children in four Massachusetts mill centers. His final results are summed up in the following table, showing the average I.Q., or intelligence quotient of natio-racial or ethnal groups.

Polish-Jews	102.8
Swedes	102.1
English	100.7
Russian-Jews	99.5
Germans	99.5
Americans (Anglo-Saxon)	98.3
Lithuanians	97.4
Irish	95.9
British-Canadians	93.8
Russians	90.0
Poles	89.6
Greeks	87.8
Italians	85.8
French-Canadians	85.3
Negroes	84.6
Portuguese	82.7

Dr. Hirsch gives good arguments for believing that in these figures he has almost, if not wholly, eliminated the effects of differences in education and in the knowledge of the English language which tend to reduce the value of the majority of such tests, including those of the United States Army. If that is so, we have a real measure of innate intelligence. Dr. Hirsch naturally points out that these results afford no basis whatever for a belief in the supremacy of Nordics *as a race*, but he has the wisdom to refrain from any counter claim for the Jews. He doubtless realizes that any such claim for any race is worse than useless until temperament can be measured as accurately as intelligence. The thing which he emphasizes is the great intellectual differences among groups of people who have been subjected to one type of natural selection or another and who have been physically or socially isolated long enough so that mental characteristics have become permanently established as part of their biological inheritance. The most noteworthy fact is that mental characteristics seem to be almost more distinct than physical characteristics. They are the true basis of natio-racial character.

To the reviewer this is especially interesting because it confirms his own conclusions as set forth in a book called "The Character of Races." Thus two wholly different lines of reasoning, one based on recent experiments, the other on a survey of history, lead to the same conclusion, namely, that within certain well-defined limits you may start with highly varied races, and get in the end similar ethnal characteristics. Suppose, for example, that we were to take several thousand typical Nordics, Alpines, and Mediterraneans, as they were ages ago when these names represented genuine races. Let each group endure a hard and prolonged migration under exactly similar conditions, with an extremely high death rate. Then let each develop in complete isolation, but under physical and social conditions like those of the other two. Give each group plenty of time so that types not adapted to the environment die out or migrate. What would be the final result? Dr. Hirsch's answer seems to be that even though the three groups still retained pronounced physical differences, their mental attributes would ultimately become much alike. This suggests that mentally the races of the world are more or less plastic. Each contains a great variety of types, but under the stress of natural selection some types tend to diminish in number and others to increase. If this be true, we might in due time evolve a race of Nordic Jews and another of Jewish Nordics—the first being rural pioneers, the second urban merchants. Dr. Hirsch does not suggest any such thing, but his careful experimental studies do emphasize the fact that human character is not of selection.

Maria Messina, a young Italian novelist who since the war has forged her way to the front ranks of Italian writers of fiction, has just issued a new tale by the name of "Le Pause della Vita" (Milan: Treves). It is a sombre story which powerfully portrays the life of a young Tuscan girl whose dreams are thwarted by her mother's harshness and uncomprehension of the normal instincts of youth. Incidentally it is a striking portrayal of Tuscan home life.

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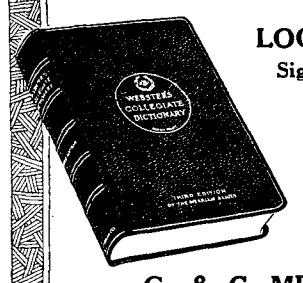

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Literature Abroad

By Ernest Boyd

WHEN Secretary Kellogg refused to allow Alexandra Kollontay, the Soviet Minister to Mexico, to pass through this country, we were told that America had thereby been saved from the contamination of subversive ideas. Aside from economic heresies, what could Madame Kollontay have said to disturb our equanimity? In search of an answer I have been reading a book of hers which aroused a sensation in Russia, and which now appears in German under the title "Wege der Liebe." Parodying the novel of Shaw's nonage, one might render this: "Love Among the Communists." It is a volume containing three stories illustrating the problems which confront the exponents of the new revolutionary sex morality in Russia, about which the newspapers used to relate such horrifying tales.

In "Three Generations in Love" the author sets forth the contrasting ideals which determine the conduct of three women in three different stages of radicalism. The story is told by a woman whose mother had passed, in her day, for a revolutionary idealist, because she had left her husband, an army officer, and had lived with a doctor of liberal convictions, both of them determined to work for the welfare of the people. The doctor proves to be more interested in Eros than in Demos, and finally is left with a servant to whom he has been attracted. The mother and her daughter go off together and work for the revolution, and at sixteen the girl is arrested for the first time. Her mother is very proud of this, although her daughter's Marxist leanings are not shared by her, but gradually the misunderstandings between them become more profound. The daughter has fallen in love with a man who is banished. While he is in exile, she contracts another relationship with a married man. Her mother is utterly appalled by the girl's inability to decide which of these men she wants, by her statement that both are necessary to her happiness.

She continues for a certain time to maintain this dual relationship, amidst the turmoil and excitements of the revolutionary movement; in the end her love for the two men dies of inanition as incomprehensibly as it once was born. She goes abroad with her daughter, meets a younger man with whom she returns to Russia, and then faces, in her turn, a conflict between mother and daughter such as she herself had lived through. Her daughter represents the fine flower of revolutionary feminism. She has attracted the attentions of her mother's friend, but is quite unable to understand her mother's indignation. She is not in love with this man, nor is she in love with another man by whom she is pregnant. Her ardors are reserved for politics, and her relations with men are as casual and physical as those of Casanova. Her mother calls this cynicism; the daughter is conscious of no wrong. To her mind, the time for love, as her mother understood it, is past. There is too much work to be done to permit emotions which are injurious to one's efficiency. Romantic love and its concomitant, jealousy, are as out of place in a modern Russian girl's scheme of things as individuality and a bottle of champagne would be in a Ford factory.

"Sisters" relates the plight of a woman whose husband has taken to drinking and bringing home with him ladies of a certain profession. Her love for him survives all trials except this latter evidence that he has no longer even feelings of friendship for her. She leaves him, but can obtain no employment because she is married to a man with the means of supporting her. Her plight is identical with that of the last prostitute whom her husband brought home. She had talked with this woman and found that she was selling herself because she could get no work. The two women exchange ideas and understand each other, and as the prostitute is about to leave the wife asks: Did he pay you? And proceeds to do so out of her own pocket. When the husband awoke from his slumbers both ladies were gone. His wife is left wondering if she, too, must take to the streets for lack of work.

The longest story in the book, "Wassilissa Malygina," which occupies more than three hundred pages, is a sort of drab epic of a revolutionary woman's experiences. In all her endeavors she is thwarted by the perverseness of human nature, whether it be in her social and political activities or in her relations with the man she loves. With the latter, in addition to the usual complications, she finds an additional source of disagreement and misunderstanding in the fact that he is untrue, not only to her, but to the very principles of communism. He has acquired a fine house and good furniture, he lives rather too lavishly, and leads an existence that is indistinguishable from that of the unspeakable bourgeoisie. He even finds fault with the simple and ascetic clothing of Wassilissa and provides her with silk and batiste to be fashioned into more seductive garments, much to her disgust. When she discovers that he also maintains another establishment for a lady of more hedonistic tastes and temperament, she decides to leave him. But it is not so easy to leave a man whom you love, even if his conduct is unworthy of a husband and a pillar of the Soviet Republic.

Throughout a lengthy analysis Madame Kollontay leads this woman to her final renunciation, when she must say to herself that her love is still in her heart, but it is a different love, a love which can surrender her man to another woman. No self-respecting communist woman can stand the degradation of living in an atmosphere of capitalism—capitalism, not adultery, should be a ground for divorce. Even the most resolute Marxist male often has enough of the old Adam in him to crave the appeal of fine clothes and luxury in a woman. This also is intolerable, and women must be on their guard against the "un-communistic" yearnings of unregenerate men. Stress must be laid upon the superior charms of the new type of comrade, as compared with the grotesque product of a good dressmaker. Feminine morality must be redefined. A pure woman is one who is not anti-social, one who recognizes her responsibility to the community first, and to her husband and children last, or not at all.

The new revolutionary sex morality strives, in other words, to remove the emphasis upon sex, by discounting the importance of physical purity and physical relations in general. Madame Kollontay's young women regret the time wasted to procure an abortion when there is so much to be done, and promise, for reasons of efficiency, to be more careful in the future. Women who are good citizens and properly active in politics should have no time to give to the romantic dalliance which we barbarians know as love and courtship. One may submit to the urge of a biological necessity, but never allow oneself to become involved in anything permanent. Soviet love is essentially a condition of intellectual and spiritual agreement between comrades. What has heretofore been understood by that term is something of minor importance, for even if there are children, the State will take care of them. Women who are temperamentally disinclined for such comradeship will play with more congenial parts as the relaxation of the Marxist warriors, thereby eliminating the prostitute as we know her, the product of economic pressure. Nature will take care of whatever harlotry is needed.

Madame Kollontay has not written a subversive tract, but has very frankly allowed these fundamental assumptions to produce the results which her stories record. To be unhappily unmarried in Russia or unhappily married in America is very much of a muchness. The human factor, the impalpable still remains, and I feel confident that Secretary Kellogg has no cause for alarm, at least not until silk and batiste arouse in the American woman the same repugnance as in the communistic breast of Wassilissa. Literary values need not be mentioned in connection with this book, as the fictional framework is of the slightest. The stories are case histories in a revolutionary experiment. They have the interest of authentic documents. They flatter no illusions.

The official standard work of the Tripoli colony has recently appeared under the title "La Rinascita della Tripolitania. Memeorie e Studi sui Quattro Anni di Governo del Conte Volpi di Misurata" (Milan: Mondadori). Encyclopaedic in character, it contains surveys political, ethnological, and agricultural, a survey of all lines of communication between Tripoli and the outside world, and a generous supply of maps and illustrations.

Students of international affairs will be interested in a collaboration by nine specialists which sets forth the aspects of post-war Belgian life and work. Edited by Ernest Mahaim, "La Belgique Restaurée" (Brussels: Lamertin) enters upon an examination of the industries, the commerce, the labor, public finance, and the living conditions of that sorely tried country.

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The New Books

The books listed by title only in the classified list below are noted here as received. Many of them will be reviewed later.

Art

THE DRAWING AND CONSTRUCTION OF ANIMALS. By *W. Evans Linton.* Scribners. $3.50.

FASHION DRAWING AND DESIGN. By *Luie M. Chadwick.* Scribners. $6.

THE ENGRAVED DESIGNS OF WILLIAM BLAKE. By *Laurence Binyon.* Scribners. $35.

VICTORIAN PHOTOGRAPHS OF FAMOUS MEN AND FAIR WOMEN. By *Julia Margaret Cameron.* Harcourt, Brace. $10.

A HISTORY OF CARICATURE. By *Bohun Lynch.* Little Brown. $6.50 net.

RODIN. By *Leonice Bénédite.* Dodd, Mead. $2.

Belles Lettres

ÆSCHYLUS AND SOPHOCLES. By *John Tresidder Sheppard.* Longmans, Green. $1.75.

MODERN TRAITS IN OLD GREEK LIFE. By *Charles Burton Gulick.* Longmans, Green. $1.75.

THE FRONTIER IN AMERICAN LITERATURE. By *Lucy Lockwood Hazard.* Crowell. $2.75 net.

Biography

MEMORIES OF SAMUEL PARSONS. Edited by MABEL PARSONS. Putnams. 1926.

The death of Samuel Parsons in 1923 removed one of the most eminent landscape architects in the country. He had practised his profession since the Centennial Year; he had joined the famous Calvert Vaux in 1880 to form the partnership of Vaux and Parsons, and had thus been drawn into the service of the city, becoming in time landscape architect of Greater New York; and he had executed many notable undertakings in landscape gardening throughout the country, including the beautiful park of 1,400 acres at San Diego, California. Not all of this is told in Miss Parsons's book. Her volume deals almost exclusively with the parks of New York City, and with Mr. Parsons's long career in beautifying and defending them. The origin of Central Park, with A. J. Downing as the chief moving force in having it established; its planning and planting; the long series of assaults made upon it; the narrow escape in the 'eighties from having a race track placed in it; the location of the Sherman statue; the gradual thinning out of the park trees; the deterioration of Central Park to its present lamentable condition—these are the subject of chapters written by Mr. Parsons shortly before his death. There is also an interesting biographical sketch of Vaux, and a history of Morningside Park, one of the most beautiful of Vaux's creations. Miss Parsons has added much supplementary material, and edited the volume with skill. It is both a record of her father's useful career, and a valuable contribution to the history of the parks of New York City.

THE PASSING SHOW. By *Henry Russell.* Little, Brown. 5 net.

LANES OF MEMORY. By *George S. Hellman.* Knopf. $3.50.

THE AUTOBIOGRAPHY AND MEMOIRS OF BENJAMIN ROBERT TAYLOR. Harcourt, Brace. 2 vols. $2.50.

THE PARSON'S DEVIL. By *Clifton Johnson.* Crowell. $2.50 net.

RABINDRANATH TAGORE. By *E. J. Thompson.* Oxford University Press. $4.

THE LIFE OF DARWIN. By *Leonard Huxley.* Greenberg.

PALMERSTON. By *Philip Guedalla.* Putnams. $5.

SAMUEL BUTLER AND HIS FAMILY RELATIONS. By *Mrs. R. S. Garnett.* Dutton. $3.75.

Education

WHAT EUROPE GIVES TO AMERICA. By *Charles A. Coulomb, Albert E. McKinley,* and *Holman White.* Scribners. $1.20.

HUMANIZING EDUCATION. By *Samuel D. Schmalhausen.* New Education Publishing Co.

A FIRST LABORATORY GUIDE IN PSYCHOLOGY. By *Mary Collins* and *James Drever.* $1.60.

THE PATH OF LEARNING. By *Henry W. Holmes* and *Burton P. Fowler.* Little, Brown. $1.50.

LIGHT FROM THE NORTH. By *Joseph K. Hart.* Holt. $1.50.

ADULT EDUCATION. By *Joseph K. Hart.* Crowell. $2.75 net.

Fiction

GRAIN. By ROBERT STEAD. Doran. 1926. $2.

"Grain" is solid, prosaic fiction, realistically depicting the Manitoba prairie farmers, which, if it soars to no very lofty heights, sinks to no depths of squalor too often found in tales of the soil. It is told in the biographical form, centering upon the life from infancy till his mid-twenties of William ("Gander") Stake, second son of pioneer Canadian homesteaders. Gander is something of a simpleton, but in his naivety there are rugged sensitiveness, honesty, and appeal that make of him a natural and readily understandable figure. Being a loyal son of the soil, he is racked by no fierce longing to assail the great world beyond the farm, to desert the old accustomed life for the city and its mythical opportunities. He is content to bide at home all his days (a predilection insufficiently stressed by novelists who share Mr. Stead's field), and it is only through a threat to his inherent uprightness, at the close, that Gander consents to migrate.

THE LAW OF THE TALON. By LOUIS TRACY. Clode. 1926. $2.

It is conceivable that Mr. Tracy, even with such unpromising materials as he here employs, should have turned out a far better tale than this. Some feeble attempt is made at the beginning to suggest dark deeds done in the mystery shrouded past, but the reader is never fooled in the least, and the effect of this weakness is to render the book singularly dull and flat. A young Scotch noble, serving at the front in the last year of the War, is drugged by his scheming cousin, thus bringing upon the innocent victim arrest, court-martial, and disgrace. All this occurs prior to the opening of the story and we first meet poor John seven years later in Canada, when he is embarking for the old country to pay back the villain who has so direfully injured him. The processes by which our hero clears his name and exacts sweet revenge are accomplished without giving any keen enjoyment to the reader.

THE BUTCHER SHOP. By JEAN DEVANNY. Macaulay. 1927. $2.

The title of this unevenly balanced tale is derived from its preoccupation with the New Zealand sheep raising industry, and insofar as the latter alone is concerned does the book rise above mediocrity. For the plot and leading characters are disappointingly weak, dim, and unconvincing. Barry Messenger, a young hereditary owner of vast sheep ranching properties, marries Margaret, his pretty domestic, a girl of seventeen. Ten years of wedlock give them four children and abundant happiness, but the hitherto faithful Margaret is then suddenly smitten by her husband's foreman, whom she adopts as her lover. Here the author totally destroys our early favorable impression by cutting loose with a vast deal of hysterical nonsense designed to persuade the reader that Margaret's infidelity is a perfectly justified and decent thing, that to betray a trustful and upright husband isn't a really serious offense, and that theoretically wives in their prime should have the privilege of an extra mate while living simultaneously with their wedded one.

THE PACER. By VIOLA PARADISE. Dutton. 1927.

This is a tale in which familiar ingredients are mixed with considerable skill, and which despite the triteness of its theme, manages to hold the interest. It is the story of a girl who deprived of the college education for which she longed by the force of poverty, and escaping from that poverty through marriage to a man her inferior in education but her superior in character, secures college experience, and through it a widening social life, only to find her love deflected from her husband to one of her new group of friends. Judith ultimately wins through to appreciation of her husband and love for him, but not until she has tasted of the cup of bitterness. Miss Paradise portrays her with considerable fidelity of detail, as she does the other personalities which play upon her life, but she has not escaped a certain woodenness in the figures she has drawn, nor is she able to make actually moving the emotions by which they are swayed. And toward the end the book slumps badly to a sentimental end.

EAST SIDE, WEST SIDE. By *Felix Riesenberg.* Harcourt, Brace. $2.50.

RIVERS TO CROSS. By *Roland Pertwee.* Houghton Mifflin. $2.

SIR PERCY HITS BACK. By *Baroness Orczy.* Doran. $2 net.

THE CITY IN THE SEA. By *H. de Vere Stacpoole.* Doran. $2 net.

SWEETWATER RANGE. By *William Patterson White.* Little, Brown. $2 net.

THE BELATED RECKONING. By *Phyllis Bottome.* Doran. $2 net.

ONE, TWO, THREE. By *Paul Selver.* Doran. $2 net.

(*Continued on next page*)

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Amy Lowell as a Poet

(*Continued from page 558*)

would call the "Amerindian," occurring in narrative poems, and duly labeled lyrics, her principal essays in the field were Rostand's "Pierrot qui Pleure et Pierrot qui Rit" which was given "as an opera in Boston." "Six French Poets: "Studies in Contemporary Literature" was an exceptionally able piece of work. From the knowledge required for and gained during the translation she provided herself with some of the most telling weapons in her critical armory. "Fir Flower Tablets" considerably enlarged the available translations of some of the ancient Chinese classical poetry. In this she collaborated with Florence Ayscough, a fine Chinese scholar. Reading this book of Chinese translations, however, gives one much the same feeling as having walked through a picture gallery where a carefully informed American artist has painted the entire exhibition in the conventions of Oriental art. The frames for the pictures were of necessity originally imported from England and the colors mixed on a Boston palette.

From those who in the final analysis of time add something to the literature of their generation there emerges from the body of their work some central conception and unifying attitude. But when we look for some such attitude in the work of Amy Lowell it is not to be found. Occasionally and recurrently there tolls through her poetry here and there the knell of personal frustration. All the rest of her verse may be regarded as an effort to compensate herself for what had been denied her, to decorate, to furnish, and to hide the bare walls of the empty chambers of her heart with magnificent mosaics, rich tapestries, and choice bric-a-brac. It was, indeed, in this domain of the decoration of surfaces that Amy Lowell was at her best. So splendid were her designs, so carefully wrought the patterns, and the mosaic and lapidary work so tastefully gorgeous and so craftsmanlike, that the total effect frequently captivated the poetic imagination. It was no ordinary performance that suspended judgment. The patina on the bronze horses and other things was magnificent.

The very house she lived in became a symbol of her personality. The dwelling itself, which she acquired from her family, was a large, comfortable Victorian mansion. Set in the front, where all could see, was a statue of Minerva, and the residence itself was separated from the community in which she lived by a park-like expanse in which the wild forest trees were carefully cherished and the garden almost frantically cultivated. There were also forcing houses which provided the owner with orchids and other exotic blooms. The personality which inhabited this mansion, formally presided over by the goddess of learning and art, and somewhat sequestered from the world about, imported into its Victorian outlines rare objects of art from all the civilizations and cultures of the past and present, among which a tremendous library occupied both in space and by spiritual implication the most conspicuous and important place. The whole estate, house, gardens, library, furniture, and ornaments, was a complete and symbolic example of a modern and peculiarly American eclecticism.

☙ ☙

And her art resembled the house she lived in. In the first poem in her first book, "Before the Altar," she dedicated herself to the moon of her art. "With empty hands" she stood there saying in 1912:

Shining and distant Goddess, hear my prayer,
Where you swim in the high air!
With charity look down on me,
Under this tree,
Tending the gifts I have not brought. . . .

This note sounds again and again through her verse. Keats, because he also worshipped the moon, although for a different reason, became identified with it and her art. It was to this altar that she announces at the beginning of her work, in a poem dedicating herself to the task, that she will bring "gifts." She did so. Just as she scoured the objective and literary world to furnish her house with objects of art and books, she heaped before the altar of her craft spoil far-fetched from the entire world of art and literature. The Occident and Orient were ransacked. Gorgeous tapestries, ceramics, jewels, furniture, and the harvest gathered from her library were heaped before the altar of the moon. In the final analysis she offered herself. Her work on Keats and the unremitting toil to which she drove herself for thirteen long years fulfilled a prophecy in the poem which announced her advent into the world of literature:

Deign to look down on me
Who so unworthily
Offers to you;
All life has known. . . .
I pour my heart and watch it burn,
Myself the sacrifice; but be
Still unmoved; Divinity.

And the divinity remained unmoved. Swinburne had said much the same thing in "A Leave-Taking:"

Yea, though we sang as angels in her ear,
She would not hear.

Both poets were confessing and predicting the same experience, i. e., the futility to them of the experiences of art as a substitute for the experiences of life. This in itself, however, is an experience of life, and it was the most important one which Amy Lowell had to record. In that sense her tragedy was alive and magnificent. It was also doubly tragic in that its cause was not only a predicament of personality but an unavoidable implication of her environment.

The American tragedy, the great American tragedy, is not to be found, as Mr. Dreiser's novel might indicate, in the sexual difficulties of elevator boys. Such things are universal rather than "American." The American tragedy is concerned with the predicament of creative souls who find in their environment nothing stable to work upon, and who emerge from it by the elastic of their own boot straps rather than by the catapult of a socially generated force. In America the artist must not only provide the metal to cast his own bullets but he must also gather the powder from everywhere and be himself the explosive spark. The energy and abilities required to do this are enormous, but the process itself is gigantically wasteful. It is in himself, then, that the artist here must trust, for "himself" is nearly all the capital he has to draw upon. Yet, if an author, he must write in a language in which a distinct scale of literary values has long obtained by a process of experiment and critical elimination. More than this, in a bid for fame he must compete with those who are thoroughly aware of those values and who practice them by inheritance. The fact that he works in a traditional medium challenges traditional comparison.

Miss Lowell thoroughly realized all this. She tried to supplement what her environment brought her (and it brought her more than many others can ever obtain,) by eight years intensive study in the field of poetry. Yet nothing is more indicative of the fact that she was one of the individual American eccentrics who are unable to take advantage of the forms found valuable by the laboratory of the past, than that when it came to phrasing her own poetry, she felt, speaking generally, that her own judgment and invention outweighed the preponderant experience of the vast majority of other poets writing in English.

It is useless to insist that "free verse" is a form. Verse and "free" are in themselves antithetical ideas. We will admit immediately that poetry may occur in any verse form and is ofttimes embodied in prose. The point is that Amy Lowell contended that her poetry in prose was poetry in verse, verse of some kind. The essence of the controversy which was engendered may be baldly summed up by stating that the nature of the English language will only permit of a certain number of strongly accentuated rhythms. These are readily recognizable whether spoken or written, and by definition the strongly accentuated rhythms have been labelled the rhythms of verse. Nor is this an arbitrary or academic definition. It is an empirical one, for it serves to establish a category based on a physical fact. Beyond these rhythms of verse the language is capable of a vast number of rhythms, but they are so irregular, unaccentuated, and so elusive, as to be beyond the realm of practical classification, These are the rhythms of prose. There is also, because the capabilities for experiencing rhythms vary in individuals, a certain "no man's land" in which the irregular rhythms of prose encroach upon the tangible rhythms of verse, or *vice versa*. But it is also true that this "no man's land" is a very narrow strip, and that one soon finds oneself, either on one side or the other, in what is certainly verse or certainly prose.

Miss Lowell refused to recognize this. She wanted to move the line separating verse from prose a little nearer toward "her side," because much of her work phrased itself in prose, and thus to include within the definition of "verse" some of the vaguer rhythms which the English speaking world used for the most part as "prose."

She saw that in order to do this she would have to establish some method of differentiating the rhythms of regular verse, the rhythms of free verse, and the rhythms of prose, which was the way she at one time hoped to arrange her categories. A large part of her time and energy was spent in trying to have the category of "free verse" as it were "officially recognized" when it had already been successfully used as a vehicle of poetry by Henley, Bridges, Whitman, and a hundred others. She even descended into the scientific laboratory in search of a method by which free verse could be recognized from prose. There was never any trouble at all in differentiating it from regular verse. What she learned in the laboratory from a phonograph disk and a needle that transmitted spoken words into curves on a sliding piece of paper was that there was nothing traced on the piece of paper when she said a "free verse poem" which could be reduced to any practicably applicable method to differentiate it from prose. As the little boy remarked about the twins, "All the differences were just the same." The laboratory experience caused Miss Lowell to pause considerably in her crusade for "free verse" and to revert to a larger extent to poetry in verse.

☙ ☙

All this was unfortunate. It was in the final analysis a waste of time. She threw her individual opinions against the weight of the experience of an age-old literature rich in poetry, and deliberately chose to phrase the bulk of her poetry in an eccentric manner. More than that, much of the manner is artificial. It and many of the poems that exemplify it are upon faint themes chosen in order not to interfere with the abstract examples of form that they exploit. Furthermore, it is now high time not to hesitate any longer to say that in nine cases out of ten such "forms," no matter how they may be tortured by the printer, are prose. After years of controversy no valid reasons based on any physical facts inherent in English speech have been so successfully advocated as to cause us to think differently. The most that can honestly be said for any practical purposes, is, that sometimes, when a passage of prose is so arranged on the printed page as to cause it to be read more rhythmically than it otherwise would be, it approaches the patterns of verse. But there is a serious difficulty inherent in this device. The pattern of the printer is only too frequently, one may safely say, generally, insufficient to the task of causing the passage to be read as its author intended it to be. Then the desired rhythmical effect is lost. Death always removed the author, and those who have heard him or her read the passage, and then no one, no one, knows how it was meant to be read. In other words it has then become an eccentrically printed piece of prose. It was to such a vehicle that Amy Lowell confided most of her poetry, and it will therefore have to run the risk of not being rhythmically tangible to the future.

It is impossible to discuss here at any greater length either the themes which Amy Lowell treated in her poetry or her method of phrasing them. Save for the theme of her frustration which alone exists poignantly, she seems to have brought to all the others an inquiry and a comment rather than an understanding sympathy. Except for a few frustrated persons such as the two childless old women in "The Doll," scarcely any of her characters breathe. Most of them indeed are grotesque people or tapestries, or models upon which to drape costumes, statues that come to life, "little ivory figures pulled by strings," historical studies at a remote distance, or automations of stone-age folklore like the Indian in "Many Swans."

Animals were to her as important as men and women, and no more so. Clocks, carvings, china ware, brocade stuffs, foxes, ghosts, houses, jewels, birds, and above all grass and flowers, she endowed with human attributes and found them just as interesting as people. Her title "Men, Women and Ghosts" was significant of all this. She provided many of these things with a stage effect of gorgeous splendor, but it is doubtful if she brought them to life. Some of these characters speak in the dialect of New England, but it is with the same mechanical tone with which Grass-Bush-and-Blossom addressed Many Swans, or the pheasants confide in the bamboo flowers. In "Appuldurcombe Park" there is a tremendous comment on the characters she had taught to speak like parrots:

I am a woman, sick for passion,
Sitting under the golden beech trees . . .
I am a woman, sick for passion,
Walking between rows of pointed tulips.
Parrot flowers, toucan-feathered flowers,
You burn me with your parrot tongues. . . .
I am a woman—sick—sick—
Sick of the touch of cold paper,
Poisoned with the bitterness of ink. . .

It is this "sickness that sprawls heavily across the whole body of her work, that speaks to her with the burning parrot tongues. The poem is phrased dramatically, but in it one catches another voice saying it. It is the golden, eager, tired voice of Amy Lowell.

The title which indicates the bounds of this discussion has limited us to "Amy Lowell the Poet." There were, it must be said again, many other sides to her personality. Her helpful inspiration and criticism, her chastening, honest indignation, her great conversation, and her tolerant, human, womanly sympathy flowed out bountifully and irradiated and quickened American letters. During her life time she was often misunderstood, belittled, and maligned by many small persons who could not get beyond the caricature of her personality. The present writer has unusual and intimate cause for knowing all this and much more, and he confesses that it has cost him no little effort to conscientiously lay it aside and to approach the work of a close friend from a detached critical standpoint. So far as possible, however, this has been done. It is hoped at least that an acceptable method of critical approach has been suggested and enough data discussed to provide a credible basis for forming opinions upon it. The reader will of course form his own opinion upon Miss Lowell as a poet, if he wishes to be sure of his ground, upon still other factors inherent in her work which cannot be introduced in anything short of a biography. It is only fair to add that some of these have also been considered here in applying the tests suggested by this article, i. e., were the themes she treated important, and were they adequately expressed, the basis of comparison to be poetry in the literature of English? The conclusion is reluctantly forced upon one that the answer is negative, and that Amy Lowell's work will inevitably take its place in the poetry of the English language as the rec
of the "great eccentrics" of the
tan American scene.

This article deals only with the poetry of Amy Lowell. Other and perhaps even more important aspects of her personality, her works as a critic and biographer, and her influence upon American poetry and letters will be discussed by the same reviewer at a later date.

The New Books

(*Continued from preceding page*)

International

OUR TESTING TIME. WILL THE WHITE RACE WIN THROUGH? By J. H. Curle. George H. Doran Co. 1927. $2.50.

Mr. Curle, who has been a journalist, a mining engineer, and a traveller, now assumes the rôle of a propagandist for eugenics. The distinguishing feature of his book is the wide knowledge it reveals of human races. The author has travelled more than a million miles, exploring the remoter areas of Africa and South America as well as the better-known portions of the globe. Much that he has to say of racial characteristics is of great interest. But his scientific generalizations read a little too much like a mixture of Albert Edward Wiggam and T. Lothrop Stoddard. Briefly, his thesis is that the whites of western Europe are the world's best hope; that they are elevated above the whites of eastern Europe by their greater stability, and above the colored peoples by their originating brains; that if they breed carefully, they will dominate the earth; but that as yet they have not learned to breed carefully, or to reject the unfit. In fact, Mr. Curle is convinced their physical deterioration is now very marked. When it comes to prescribing remedies, he has a courage even more reckless than his generalizations. He would give everyone a passport, with a *dossier* attached showing heredity, physical fitness, mental equipment, education, and "citizen value." Those whose *dossier* is good would be issued a permit, renewable yearly, to breed children; those whose record is poor would be debarred from breeding. Naturally, Mr. Curle sees that there are obstacles to any such program. He would sweep away one of the chief by abolishing democratic government and substituting a benevolent dictatorship.

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THE STATUS OF ALIENS IN CHINA

By Vi Kyuin Wellington Koo

Acting Foreign Minister of the Peking Government

The question of extra-territoriality and the rights of foreigners in China will be one of the first problems taken up when the civil war is over and a stable government is established. The former Chinese minister at Washington and London will doubtless have an important influence in solving the problem on which he wrote his thesis while a student at Columbia University in 1911.

Paper. 359 pages. $3.75

COLUMBIA UNIVERSITY PRESS

New York

Poetry

VERSES NEW AND OLD. By JOHN GALSWORTHY. Scribners. 1926. $1.50.

Alas, alas for Hamlin! Alas for Mr. Galsworthy! We expected wine with a flavor when we opened this book. Instead we get it luke-warm and diluted. In this medium of verse, the author is one of the many haunted by the wistful shadow of Beauty, yet never basking in her full sun; as sensitive to the many changes on the face of Nature as a wind harp, yet unable to express them except in sentimentalized and trite verse, in which there is an occasional flash of something better.

The innocency and freshness of the English countryside so individually felt by W. H. Davies who can write no short poem without distinction, is lost in these reflections of John Galsworthy. The poem "To Beauty" is the best in the book:

Bring me knowledge:
How the pansies are made and the cuckoos' song!
And the little owls, grey in the evening, three on a gate;
The gold-cups a-field, the flight of the swallow;
The eyes of the cow who has calved;
The wind passing from ash-tree to ash-tree! . . .
For thee shall I never cease aching?
Do the gnats ache that dance in the sun?

WILLIAM COWPER: Two Poems. Oxford University Press. $1.50.

EPISTLE TO DR. ARBUTHNOT. By *Alexander Pope*. Oxford University Press. $2.50.

RAOUL DE CAMBRAI. Translated from the Old French by *Jessie Crosland*. Oxford University Press. $1.85.

CINEMA. By *Eugene Jolas*. Adelphi.

POPPIES AND MANDRAGORA. By *Edgar Saltus*. Vinal. $2.

WHITE MUSIC. By *Arthur Truman Merrill*. Vinal. $1.50.

THE COLLECTED SATIRES OF LORD ALFRED DOUGLAS. London, 12 Buckingham Palace Road: Fortune Press.

PERSONÆ. By *Ezra Pound*. Boni & Liveright. $3.50.

Religion

THE KABBALAH. By ADOLPH FRANCK. Revised and Enlarged Translation by Dr. I. Sossnitz. New York: The Kabbalah Publishing Company. 1926.

This is at once a spirited and a scholarly study of the traditionally sacred Jewish writing that goes under the general name of Kabbalah: its origin, its content, its influence, its insignificance. This body of writing is accorded a very high place in comparison with other sources of wisdom. Its originality is insisted upon, though kinship is admitted with Platonism, with Christianity, and especially with Zoroastrianism. Indeed, the author finds grounds for believing that "the materials of the Kabbalah were drawn from the ancient Persians," though, he argues, its claim to originality is not compromised by this fact. The book as a whole makes accessible to English readers in adequate form what has long been available in Europe—a comprehensive exposition of and a stimulating apology for Jewish philosophy from a devout and able mind of the nineteenth century.

THE LIVING CHURCH ANNUAL. 1927. Milwaukee, Wis.: Morehouse.

(*Continued on page 570*)

The Reader's Guide

Conducted by MAY LAMBERTON BECKER

Inquiries in regard to the selection of books and questions of like nature should be addressed to MRS. BECKER, c/o *The Saturday Review*.

A BALANCED RATION

THE AUTOBIOGRAPHY AND MEMOIRS OF BENJAMIN ROBERT HAYDON (Harcourt, Brace).

THE MINISTER'S DAUGHTER. By *Hilda Dixelius* (Dutton).

THE FRONTIER IN AMERICAN LITERATURE. By *Lucy L. Hazard* (Crowell).

WITH glad cries the companions of this column come bringing "light and pleasant" novels for the man from Massachusetts. *H. H. B., Columbus, O.*, wishes him good luck on his search, because her own bookshelf—she runs a bookstore—consists entirely of chuckly books. From this collection she recommends the novels of Ralph Straus, "The Unseemly Adventure" and "Married Alive" (Holt). "Touched with a few broader strokes, 'Married Alive' would be a delicious farce," says she. "I hope to see it some day on the stage, but just as it is it is a most pleasing book. Straus's last novel, 'Our Wiser Sons' (Holt), shows a keen sense of humor, although there are not so many situations that arouse chuckles as in 'The Unseemly Adventure.' Then there is Denis Mackail's 'Greenery Street'—such charming fun is hard to find. His 'Romance to the Rescue' would be worth while hunting up too—it came out about four years ago. Can't we also include Robert Nathan's 'Puppet Master' (McBride), and 'Jonah' (McBride)?" (Note by Mrs. Becker: I don't see why we can't. "Jonah" is a book in a thousand, a treasure to the discerning, one of those novels that make friends of strangers who each find that the other man has read it. Why, to love that book lets one in directly to a set of choice spirits whose quality makes up for what his publishers must regard as their regrettably small number.)

H. H. B. goes on, "If our friend doesn't object to laughing out loud, please recommend very highly, as the best of fun, 'Topper,' by Thornton Smith (McBride). Such a natural transformation from a deadly Babbit to a real human being, and all done by a charming lady ghost."

"How About the Somerville and Ross books?" says *H. V. C. D., Pinehurst, N. C.* "They are perhaps provoking of out-and-out laughter rather than of chuckles, but the humor is mostly of situation." For the benefit of such readers as have yet to discover the delights stored for them by these light-hearted ladies, it may be noted that their books are all published by Longmans, Green, and that a good one to begin with is "Experiences of an Irish R. M.," also that their joint autobiography, "Irish Memories," is as pleasant as the fiction. *N. A. K., Purdue University, Lafayette, Ind.*, suggests "A Perfect Day," by Bohun Lynch (here's another novel with a small and special public). *B. W., New York*, says that nothing so completely fills the bill as "Miss Mapp," by E. F. Benson (Doran), save possibly another novel by the same author, "Queen Lucia" (Doran); the difference is mainly that in the latter the fun sometimes boils over, while in "Miss Mapp" it just goes on bubbling and bubbling till the last page. "Miss Mapp" should be lent only under the strictest of time-clauses: if I had thought of this in time I should not now be reduced to borrowing a copy when I need complete and recreating relaxation of mind. Most of all, says *M. P. H., New York*, we need agitation to keep books of this kind in print; she had a copy of "The Red House," by E. Nesbit, which she kept to loan out to people recovering from the grippe or otherwise out of tune with the universe. After many such round trips the last return ticket was lost, and the work is now out of print. She counts it as the most virtuous act of her life that when she lately came upon a copy, in a pension in Palermo, she held tightly to the Ten Commandments and left it there. If this correspondent will look over "Greenery Street," praised above, she will find in it the nearest approach I know to E. Nesbit's charming story of a new-married couple's householding experiences.

These are the contributions to the subject that came in a single mail. Clearly there are more to come.

R. W. L., Amherst College, asks about books and critical essays regarding Desiderius Erasmus. He has already bought Preserved Smith's "Erasmus" (Harpers).

THIS is a list that must be either very long or very short. Once begin to collect books on the Humanists and their period, and there is no end to the documentation. But for the reader whose interest in Erasmus has been fired by Professor Smith's book—the latest to be dedicated to the subject, the first chapters of his earlier work, "The Age of the Reformation" (Holt), will provide further material and the whole work prove fascinating. Ever since the nineties, when it was given as lectures at Oxford, J. A. Froude's "The Life and Letters of Erasmus" (Scribners) has been cited as a brilliant picture of the period, but Professor Smith, while he admits it is "charmingly written," says it is "marred by gross carelessness." To the series called "Great Hollanders," published by Scribners, J. Huizinga of the University of Leyden has added "Erasmus," a biography with a critical discussion of his works and an analysis of his place in the great controversies of the time; it is a small book to hold so much, and an excellent introduction to further study. Ephraim Emerton's "Erasmus" was published in 1900; I do not know if it be now in print.

For the generation out of which Erasmus sprang, the immortal "Cloister and the Hearth" stands as a monument: Erasmus himself is only a little chap when the story is over, but what a picture the reader has of his world! His "Praise of Folly" is published by the Oxford University Press in inexpensive form, and so is a volume of "Selections." The student bewitched by the period of the early Renaissance should bear in mind that he is safe in the hands of Arthur Tilley, and that in anything he has written a "general reader" may find not only sound scholarship but the materials for steady enjoyment.

W. C. C., Chicago, Ill., has been reading Theodore Roosevelt's "Letters to His Children," and wonders if there are other collections of entertaining letters to small folks. The only one he has is Lord Chesterfield's letters to his son, which does not seem to fill the bill.

THE ideal letter-writer to the young was Lewis Carroll. He had a way of running a story through several letters, and "The Three Cats" in the recently published "Further Nonsense Verse and Prose," by Lewis Carroll (Appleton), is assembled from such a series. This story seems to me the most completely satisfactory work of its kind: it keeps me from start to finish in the state of pure bliss that only perfect nonsense can procure. Edward Lear wrote to young people with much the same ease; it was for one of them that he composed the deathless lines beginning "How pleasant to know Mr. Lear!" which precede the introduction to the 1907 edition (Little, Brown) of the "Nonsense Books." I thought I would find some letters to children in the published correspondence of Algernon Charles Swinburne, but I learn from the Watts-Dunton life that he fed his passion for babies on photographs only, and was notoriously inept with them at close range. Thackeray wrote charmingly to his daughters; you can find gems in his printed letters. Charles Dickens's notes to his children when they were little are of the type of the affectionate papa who hopes they will get on with their spelling, but whatever he writes to anyone about children is thoroughly understanding, and on August 25, 1858, he wrote to Miss Hogarth, being in Ireland at the time, a report of a dialogue with the little son of his landlord, so completely in the spirit of childhood that I love to read it over now and again. Caroline Hewins's "A Traveler's Letters to Boys and Girls" (Macmillan), is made of genuine letters-home to nieces and nephews when the author, a librarian of nation-wide reputation, was on a European journey. The book appeared almost at the time of her recent death: her "Mid-Century Child and His Books" (Macmillan) is a posthumous publication. These travelers' letters are good preparation for children going abroad.

This type of letter should offer a field of action to people who get together collections of things in book-form. If Brimley Johnson can give so much pleasure with his volume of "Blue-Stocking Letters" and E. V. Lucas delight so many with those gathered in "The Gentlest Art" and "The Second Post," why would it not be a good idea to get together a volume of letters really written to children? They would have to be assembled from many sources, but they might be worth assembling.

T. J. G., Monticello, Iowa, asks for books about Mexico, including history, geographical and social conditions and foreign relations, and of fiction whose scene is laid in Mexico.

THE latest books on Mexico are George Creel's "The People Next Door" (Day), which is not long from the press, and "The United States and Mexico," by J. F. Rippy (Knopf), out a few months ago; about the same time came "The Rosalie Evans Letters from Mexico" (Bobbs-Merrill), while since the Theatre Guild opened its fall season with Werfel's "Juarez and Maximilian" the play has been published by Simon and Schuster—a play that continually sits down to think, but in the main thinks along lines by no means inapplicable to present conditions. Blasco Ibañez wrote not long ago of "Mexico in Revolution" (Dutton). "The Mexican Nation: a History," by Herbert I. Priestly (Macmillan), is a scholarly and comprehensive work that goes to 1923. Edith O'Shaughnessy's "A Diplomat's Wife in Mexico" and "Diplomatic Days" (Harpers) revealed the talents later to be put to such good use in her novel "Viennese Medley." "Mexico of the Mexicans," by Lewis Spence (Scribners), is a general survey interesting from any point of view: Terry's "Guide to Mexico" (Houghton Mifflin) is a standard work for the traveler; Vernon Quinn's "Beautiful Mexico" (Stokes) is noticeable for its pictures, which are from views by the most celebrated photographer in that part of the world. "Mexico and Her People Today," by Nevin O. Winter (Page), has been revised and now goes to 1923. The scientist will find reports of expeditions in William T. Hornaday's "Camp Fires on Desert and Lava" (Scribners), and Carl Lumholtz's "New Trails in Mexico" (Scribners), which describe animals, plants, and ethnological matters, with many fine illustrations: Mr. Hornaday's book is interesting to the sportsman as well as to the zoölogist. Two books show Mexico as observed on foot: Harry Foster's "A Gringo in Mañana Land" (Dodd), and Harry Franck's "Tramping Through Mexico" (Century); Stephen Graham, though a famous foot traveler, in "In Quest of El Dorado" (Appleton), takes Mexico in a more conventional manner; these all include Central America. The popularity of C. M. Flandrau's "Viva Mexico" (Appleton) seems not to flag: the book keeps not only in print but in demand, and has probably given more Americans an idea of their neighbors to the south than any other book. Margaret Cameron's "The Pretender Person" (Harpers), is one of the few travel-novels of Mexico: so far as I know it is the only one that fits the story into the country rather than using the country as a background. Wallace Gilpatrick's "The Man Who Likes Mexico" (Century) is another friendly interpretation kept alive by its charm.

As for books that attempt to interpret one country to another, or to inform the American reader on present-day conditions, here are a few that have appeared in the past few years and are still in print, and of sufficient importance to merit a place in a library. "Mexico and Its Reconstruction," by Chester Jones (Appleton, 1921); "Mexico on the Verge," by E. J. Dillon (Doran, 1921); "The Social Revolution in Mexico," by E. A. Ross (Century); "Mexico, an Interpretation," by Carleton Beals (Huebsch, 1923); "The People of Mexico: Who They

(*Continued on next page*)

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Points of View

Browning's Book

To the Editor of *The Saturday Review*:
SIR:

I am happy to be able to answer the problem raised in Lady Adams's London letter with regard to Browning's French text-book; I do not claim absolute certainty for my identification of it, but the circumstantial evidence is so strong that in default of any other hypothesis I feel confident that mine may stand. I have already announced it to the Philological Association of the Pacific Coast, at its meeting in Leland Stanford University last November, and a report of my findings is in the hands of the editor of *Modern Language Notes*, scheduled for early publication. Meanwhile, the outstanding facts may be summarized, in the hope that Lady Adams or some other investigator may be able to pursue the clue further.

When I first noticed Browning's reference to the book in his letters, I naturally assumed that some biographer would have discussed it, and I only gradually made the discovery—which Lady Adams also experienced—that the reticence of the experts is unanimous. But I am astonished to learn that so many distinguished authorities attacked the mystery in vain, for despite my isolation in California I found little difficulty in getting on the track of a probability.

Obviously, the key to the situation must be in the reference to the "old French master" who published the "elementary French book, on a new plan" which the young poet "did" for him. The life of Browning by Griffin and Minchin immediately provided the information that after leaving Mr. Ready, Browning studied under "a French tutor, Loradoux by name." And under that name in the British Museum catalogue appears a book which fulfils in every detail the qualifications for being the mysterious work.

It is "Le Gil Blas de la Jeunesse à l'Usage des Écoles (dans lequel on a fait avec le soin le plus scrupuleux, tous les rétranchemens nécessarires, pour en rendre la lecture convenable, amusante, et instructive aux jeunes gens)" by Charles LeRoy, Professeur de Langue Française au Collège de Camberwell, and A. Loradoux, Professeur de Langues, Walworth. It was published in 1835 by Whittaker & Co., and William Pickering, and was printed by A. Vogel, High Street, Camberwell. The three-page preface in English, setting forth the purpose and method of the book, although not signed, is dated Camberwell, August 12th, 1835.

Camberwell was of course the home of Robert Browning at this time, and exactly five months earlier he had dedicated "Paracelsus" to his French friend, Amédée de Ripert-Monclar. So the place and the date are satisfactory. The other clue is that of the concurrent reviews, and this is satisfied in at least one instance by the *Metropolitan Magazine*, in the supplement to the 1835 volume: on page 39 "Paracelsus" is described as "homely, crude, and ambitiously unpopular," and on page 43 "Le Gil Blas de Jeunesse" is accorded a favorable notice, though without mention of the authors' names. Further search might disclose additional reviews, but this one is enough to substantiate Browning's comment, and it is a well-known fact that he unconsciously magnified the ill-success of "Paracelsus" as he looked back on it. Hence my surprise at finding from Lady Adams's closing paragraph that Dr. Garnett, Mrs. Hugh Walker, and "other searchers" held that "no book was published then (i.e. in 1835) by any French Master that tallied with the instructors of the young Robert," and that there is "no trace of laudatory or any other kind of reviews in the papers and magazines that praised or condemned 'Paracelsus'."

As for the book itself—the "new plan" that Browning mentioned with a touch of pride—it consists, in addition to expurgation, of a progressive method, beginning with interlinear translation, advancing to a freer translation with the English and French text on opposite pages, and then relinquishing translation entirely and giving only footnotes on difficult idioms. The work is competently done, the English translation being faithful without sacrificing idiomatic clearness; but the assumption that a student could proceed from interlinear word-for-word translation to unassisted reading, in the course of a single book, is rather optimistic.

A fuller description of the book, with examples of its method, and a discussion of Browning's share in it, will appear in my article in *Modern Language Notes*. However, I trust that I have said enough to show how completely "Le Gil Blas de la Jeunesse" satisfies the requirements of the Browning item; and since Lady Adams has brought the matter before the attention of your readers, my sequel may not only modify her sense of the mystery's insolubility but also, I hope, lead to further discoveries.

LIONEL STEVENSON.
University of California.

How to Judge?

To the Editor of *The Saturday Review*:
SIR:

We take all the *Reviews* and I have often had occasion to criticize them adversely for their tendency toward praising mediocre books. Dashiel Hammett's review of five mystery stories in your January 15th number is so honest and efficient that I am moved to commend it highly and to ask for more of the same kind. I get so tired reading reviews of such ordinary, threadbare stories as those of Carolyn Wells, Natalie Lincoln, and many others which are almost invariably called "thrilling," "exciting," "original," etc.

Your criticisms are useless unless they discriminate within the field (mystery stories, Western stories, and the like), between books which vary widely in workmanship, originality, plausibility, and emotional appeal. No one but an experienced reader of mystery stories should review them. I take a particular interest in that type of story for I read all of them and serve as a sort of censor to some of the libraries of this region.

It seems to me that librarians are most helpless (in their dependence upon printed reviews), with regards to choosing three types of books: mystery and detective stories; stories of the west and far north; and the brilliant, sophisticated novels which are praised so extravagantly and which die such an early death. If all the books in these classes were given to honest, conservative, experienced readers who would do as good a job as Mr. Hammett has done, the reviews would win the appreciation of hundreds of librarians to say nothing of other readers.

From among a gross or two of mystery stories of the past season, the following seem to be too good to be immediately forgotten: Phillpotts's "Jig-Saw," Bruck's "Col. Gore's Second Case," Buchan's "Dancing Floor," Burr's "West of the Moon," Crafts's "Inspector French's Greatest Case," Freeman's "Puzzle Lock," "Cheyne Mystery" (and perhaps "D'Arllsy Mystery) Knox's "Viaduct Murder," Miller's "Colfax Bookplate," Scott's "Book Stamps," Bigger's "Chinese Parrot," including Wallace's "King by Night," "Door with Two Locks," "Fellowship of the Frog," for pure sensationalism and a few of Fletcher's sturdy, rather mechanical, but always interesting stories (I except his short stories which are invariably dull—Fletcher is never very thrilling).

What I would like to see is a similar list of stories of the West and Northwest, for they all look alike to me and some must be better and more original than others.

Why was Oppenheim's "Harvey Gerrard's Crime" reviewed so extravagantly? It is an old theme, the deénouement is obvious, the love story cheap, it is not exciting or engrossing. If Oppenheim had not written it I doubt if a publisher would have accepted it. Yet one critic after another helped to create an artificial demand and disappoint a multitude of readers.

LESLIE T. LITTLE.
Waltham Public Library.

A Correction

To the Editor of *The Saturday Review*:
SIR:

How comes your reviewer of Chase's "The Young Voltaire," (December 25), to write of Churton Collins's "Voltaire in England" as "recent"? Harpers published "Bolingbroke, and Voltaire in England"—in 1886,—essays that had already appeared in *The Quarterly Review* and *Cornhill*. An important reason for an entirely fresh study of the subject is the antiquated character of Collins's book, the only essay with the specific title, I believe, in English.

W. P. REEVES.
Gambier, Ohio.

The New Books

(*Continued from preceding page*)

Travel

CITIES OF ITALY. By ARTHUR SYMONS. Dutton. 1926. $2.50.
CITIES OF SICILY. By EDWARD HUTTON. Little, Brown. 1927. $3.50.

Mr. Symons's studies of Italian cities have lost nothing of their charm by the passage of time since first they made their appearance. Interpretations rather than descriptions, they reflect the impressions of an observer at once a lover of art and a poet with a sense for the historical. They are written, of course, with distinction, and with nice discrimination in the choice of detail, and are shot through with a constant, though restrained, enthusiasm. Mr. Symons has more to give than mere word pictures of Rome, or Florence, or Naples; he is able to convey the temperament as well as the physical characteristics of the cities he portrays, and to enrich by his comment the import of scene, or building, or painting to the reader. His book is one that should make special appeal to the public that is familiar with the places it describes.

Mr. Hutton's volume is more specific in the information it presents, less far-reaching in its interpretation. But it, too, is written with grace and charm, and like Mr. Symons's studies, manages to impart the enthusiasm of the author without cloying description. Mr. Hutton includes in his portrayals sketches of the cities that lie within the usual itinerary of the traveler, and adds in each instance to his depiction of the aspects of the town and the enumeration of its features of special interest some pages of condensed history. His book, while it can be read with much enjoyment after the event, should be of great service during the course of a journey through Sicily. It it a pity that it should be so physically unattractive as its close-set pages make it.

WEST OF THE PACIFIC. By ELLSWORTH HUNTINGTON. Scribners. 1925. $4.50.

"West of the Pacific" is written from such a purely Occidental standpoint that it would appear that the author is not particularly sympathetic with the East as such, almost, indeed, as if he were half-heartedly hopeful of its eventual westernization. Hence of all Oriental countries he approves most of Japan, reserving enthusiasm, however, for Australia alone, because it best meets those American standards of practice and of ideals which are always in the back of his mind. Yet his pleasure in his tour was so keen that as a travel-book his volume well fulfils the first and last requirement—it makes the reader want to go over the same ground himself, and wish, besides, that he might have a Dr. Huntington, with his fund of special information, common sense, and amiability, which must have made him a welcome guest everywhere, as guide and friend.

The volume, which contains nearly fifty illustrations and an index, recounts the author's stop-overs, totalling many weeks, in Japan, Korea, China, Java, Australia, on his way as delegate to the Second Pan-Pacific Science Congress held at Melbourne and Sydney in August, 1923.

Its chief claim to attention is as a series of speculations of a man of science. As was to be expected from the Research Associate in Geography at Yale and from the first propounder of the now famous theory regarding the rate of growth of the Big Trees of California, some of these speculations are highly illuminating. Their originality consists in the light they throw on the two problems of his immediate interest, the one relating to the climate and the other to the biological inheritance of the races seen in his travels.

Perhaps, after all, Dr. Huntington is to be considered primarily as a prophet. One of his depth of knowledge and width of travel must be listened to with respect. Every section of this book utters a warning to the peoples, which gains in force by repetition, on the necessity of the artificial restriction of the population, on the diminution of the number of children in the families of the less competent classes.

ANCIENT CITIES AND MODERN TRIBES: Exploration and Adventure in Maya Lands. By THOMAS GANN. Scribners. 1926. $5.

Anything like the present Nicaraguan row, and the inferences that are often drawn from it, gives a certain special pertinence to the comments of an expert, like Dr. Gann, on the ancient civilization of Central America.

Here are palaces, courts, bas-reliefs, statuettes, the evidences of a material civilization that astonishes every intelligent traveler, existing in a region now given over to jungles and fevers, and more or less chronic political disturbance. The stray gringo—who, to be sure, knows little of the charming and healthful side of Central America—sees some coast town's row of low red roofs, its fringe of palm trees and slow-hopping buzzards, shivers at the thought of being marooned there, and tells you that there never was a civilization worth anything produced in the tropics. Or at any rate, he concludes that nothing good could come out of such a place as Central America.

But the Mayas lived there, somehow or other, and they built up a civilization which compared favorably, it would seem, with ancient civilization existing at a similar time in the old world. Dr. Gann, who is medical officer in British Honduras, when not lecturing at Liverpool University or exploring the jungles of Honduras, Guatamala, and Yucatan, tells about a sun-dial four and a half miles wide (it functioned between two adjacent hilltops) and suggests that the Mayas had a better notion of the age of the earth than any other people had before the middle of the nineteenth century. He tells a lot of things of similar interest about that people, whose tragic disappearance left behind only the skeleton, so to speak, of their civilization, without any very understandable human drama to hang on the dry bones.

The present book is by way of being a continuation of the story already partly told in his earlier books, "Mystery Cities" and "In an Unknown Land." It is, indeed, so gossipy and unpretentiously written, that it is best adapted to those who already have a certain notion of the Maya explorations. Nothing is dramatized or written with the purpose of providing good headlines and an advertisement for the author. Several of his finds and observations in the regions of Ichpaatun, Lubaantun, and Copan (of which last Dr. Gann was himself the discoverer) suggest the revision of dates and conjectures already more or less accepted. But these are not played up in any way, and merely come along in due course, in a rambling narrative of adventures with people along the trail, with ticks and chigs blood-sucking bats.

In short, a travel-book, of garrulous sort, by a man who has seen a lot of his subject, and is first of all a physician, then an archæologist, and only incidentally a writer. The book is illustrated by a map and some half hundred excellent photographs, partly of the ruins and relics themselves, partly of people and things met along the way.

AROUND THE WORLD IN 28 DAYS. By LINTON WELLS. Houghton Mifflin. 1926. $3.50.

One question mutinously persists through a reading of Mr. Wells's rapid, not to say brassy and cocksure, narrative, and that is —"What of it?" It evens survives a rereading of Vihljalmur Stefansson's introduction, which in its temperate tone and lucid English is at the opposite pole from the author's. As we understand Mr. Stefansson, this headlong, hideously expensive, and uncomfortable journey had its ultimate justification in persuading Edward S. Evans, who financed the trip and accompanied his more articulate partner on it, that a short air route across the Arctic is a much superior way of getting to Tomsk or Yokohama in an even greater hurry. It proved to both travellers what they knew before, that there are not enough commercial planes in the United States. As for Mr Wells, it gave him material for a book and a novel. Nevertheless, it seems on a whole another case of much cry and little wool.

Reader's Guide

(*Continued from preceding page*)

Are and How They Live," by Wallace Thompson (Harpers, 1921), and the same writer's "The Mexican Mind" (Little, Brown, 1922); "Mexico, Today and Tomorrow," by E. D. Trowbridge (Macmillan, 1919); "Latin America and the United States," by G. H. Stuart (Century, 1922). On special aspects of the country I recall two books that greatly interested me: one was a mining engineer's account which threw light on many matters, called "In and Under Mexico," by Ralph Ingersoll (Century, 1924), and the other, T. A. Willard's amazing "City of the Sacred Well" (Century, 1926), whose account of researches among the ruins of Mayan palaces made me shout for it in this column last summer.

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The World of Rare Books

By Frederick M. Hopkins

BOOKS RARE AND IN DEMAND

IN the issue of January 22 of *The Saturday Evening Post* of Philadelphia there is a very interesting interview with Dr. Rosenbach on the subject "Talking of Old Books" as told by Avery Strakosh. After talking about old books from many angles, Dr. Rosenbach touches upon books most likely to be rare and in demand. He says:

"The inception of any great movement, whether material or spiritual, is interesting and, according to its relative importance, will draw and hold the attention of the world. The Gutenberg Bible—leaving aside the question of its artistic merit and the enormous value of its contents—as the first printed book, holds the greatest specific interest. But it so happens that this wonderful Bible is also one of the finest known examples of typography. No books ever printed are more beautiful than this first work of Gutenberg, the first printer, although created almost 500 years ago. It has always seemed an interesting point to me that printing is the only art which sprang into being full-blown. Later years brought about a more uniform appearance of type, but aside from this we have only exceeded the early printers in speed of execution. Enormous value is added to some of these early books because they are the last word in the printer's art.

"The first books which were printed on subjects of universal interest are the rarest 'firsts' of all for the collector. These include early romances of chivalry, of which few copies are found today. They are generally in poor condition, as their popular appeal was tremendous, and they were literally read to pieces. They were really the popular novels of the period. The ones which come through the strife of years successfully are extremely rare. For instance, there are the Caxtons. William Caxton was the first printer in England, and the first to print books in the English language. When he brought out the second edition of Chaucer's 'Canterbury Tales' in 1484, with its fascinating woodcut illustrations, it was literally devoured by contemporary readers. This and other publications of Caxton were very popular—he evidently had a good eye for best sellers—and now a perfect Caxton is difficult to find. One of the finest Caxtons in existence is 'Le Morte d'Arthur' by Sir Thomas Mallory, published in 1485. This perfect copy, this jewel among Caxtons, sold at the dispersal of the library of the Earl of Jersey in 1885 for £1,950, approximately $9,500. Now this is an excellent example of a book becoming more valuable for its pristine condition, perfect state, as well as for its alluring contents. Twenty-six years later it brought $42,800 at the Hoe sale. It is now one of the treasures adorning the Pierpont Morgan Library.

"The first editions of books which have that quality so glibly called today sex appeal, such as Boccaccio's 'Decameron,' and his 'Amore di Florio e di Bianchafiore'—a wicked old romance of the fifteenth century, truly the first snappy story—are firsts of which there are but few left for our edification. They are extremely precious to the collector, no matter what their condition. The first book on murder, the first book on medicine or magic; the first on Indian captivity; the first music book, the first newspaper, or the comparatively modern subject, shorthand—the first book marking the advance of civilization, is always valuable.

"One of the rarest and most interesting books is the first sporting book—'The Book of Hunting and Hawking'—printed at St. Albans, in 1486, by an unknown man, called for convenience of classification, the Schoolmaster Printer. Women were sport writers even in those days, for this record was written by a woman, Dame Juliana Barnes, sometimes known as Berners. A copy was sold in the Hoe sale in 1911 for $12,000 to Mr. Henry E. Huntington, who has one of the greatest collections in the world. This and Walton's 'The Compleat Angler' are the two greatest sporting books of all time. Yet, because there are more copies of the latter in existence, a fine copy of the first edition is worth not more than $8,500 today.

"Another tremendously rare book is the much read 'Pilgrim's Progress.' No work, with the exception of the Bible, has enjoyed greater popularity all through the years than this powerful imaginative and moral tale. I have almost every edition of it, in every language. A best seller for years after the author's death, and a very good seller today, too, the early editions were read to bits. So it is hardly surprising that only six perfect copies of the first edition exist. A few months ago a copy sold at Sotheby's in London for £6,800. I believe if one of the half dozen perfect first editions were offered in public sale today it would easily bring from $40,000 to $45,000."

AUTOGRAPHS AT ANDERSON'S

THE collection of historical autograph letters and documents formed by the late Tristram Coffin of this city was sold at the Anderson Galleries in two sessions on January 7, 431 lots bringing $26,462.75. The sale was well attended, bidding was spirited, and prices on the most attractive items were high.

The highest price, $3,600, was paid by James F. Drake for an A.L.S. of Edgar Allan Poe, two pages, quarto, February 16, 1847, written to G. W. Evelett refuting the charge of plagiarism in connection with "The Conchologist's First Book." Referring to this book, Poe says that he "wrote it in conjunction with Professor Thomas Wyatt and Professor MacMurtrie of Philadelphia, my name being put to the work, as best known and most likely to aid its circulation. I wrote the Preface and Introduction and translated from Cuvier, the accounts of the animals, etc. All schoolbooks are necessarily made in a similar way. The very title page acknowledges that the animals are given 'according to Cuvier.' This charge is infamous and I shall prosecute for it as soon as I settle my account with the 'Mirror'."

A few of the more important lots and the prices realized were the following:

Adams (John). A.L.S., 2 pp., 4to, New York, May 26, 1789, to Benjamin Lincoln, relating to the soverignity of the nation and precedence of the President. $225.

Burke (Edmund). A.L.S., 3 pp., 4to, Charles Street, December 14, 1781, asking Lord North to exchange Henry Laurens for Gen. Burgoyne. $460.

Burns (Robert). A.L.S., 2 pp., 4 to, Lawn Market, n. d. Formerly in the collection of Prince Albert. $600.

Franklin (Benjamin). A.L.S., 1 p., 4to, Passy, March 31, 1784, to Henry Laurens making arrangements for the exchange of ratifications of the Treaty of Peace. $1,900.

Herkimer (Nicholas). L.S., 1 p., 4to, County of Tryon, Committee Chamber, August 12, 1775. $350.

Irving (Washington). Manuscript of "Communipaw," signed "Hermanus Vanderdonk." 21 pp., 8vo. Contains a long unpublished postscript. $480.

Poe (Edgar Allan). A.L.S., 2 pp., 4to, Philadelphia, September 18, 1841. In regard to the *Penn Magazine*. $1,100.

Washington (George). L.S., 1 p., folio, Morristown, N. J., April 5, 1777. In regard to the defence of the Jerseys. $360.

Any one possessing letters written by the late Joseph Pennell is requested to send them to Mrs. Pennell, in care of Little, Brown & Co., 34 Beacon Street, Boston, Mass. Mrs. Pennell is anxious to see all such letters in connection with writing of the artist's "Life and Letters." She will greatly appreciate any help that is given her in the matter, and letters will of course be returned to their owners as soon as she has examined them.

Georges Courteline, who was recently elected to the Goncourt Academy, is a novelist whose popularity is not alone with the cultured but as well in the barracks, the shops, and the cafés of which he writes. The son of Jules Moinaux, himself a well-known author in his day, he early assumed the pen name of Courteline. In addition to his election to the Goncourt Academy he won another signal honor last year in the award of the literary prize of the French Academy.

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WE guess we'll take up music for a change. Anyway, we heard something at Carnegie Hall the other night that stimulated us considerably. The Cleveland Orchestra, Nikolai Sokoloff conducting, gave us *Douglas Moore's* "Pageant of P. T. Barnum" for the first time in New York. We enjoyed it thoroughly. After a period as curator of Musical Arts at the Cleveland Museum of Arts, Moore is now a member of the faculty of the Department of Music at Columbia and conductor of the Columbia University orchestra. As a composer he has been a pupil of the late Horatio Parker and of the French composer, Vincent d'Indy. Sokoloff, perhaps, rendered Moore's "Barnum" with rather less than the obstreperous joy it should have been accorded, but the suite struck us as refreshingly original. There seemed to be a feeling on the part of the critics that it lacked depth, as nowadays, we suppose, even the Meteoric Showman is seen as a great tragic figure. Tragic nothing,—nor deep! Moore has not made the mistake of being heavy with Barnum, and the variety he furnishes in his treatment of Joice Heth, the antideluvian negress, General and Mrs. Tom Thumb, and Jenny Lind, excellently indicates the gamut that Barnum's exhibiting genius ran. . . .

According to *Ben De Casxres,* in his article in the current *American Mercury,* the complete American (not the average American) is a composite of P. T. Barnum, Jesse James, William Jennings Bryan, Dr. Frank Crane, Billy Sunday, Theodore Roosevelt, Edgar A. Guest, and Woodrow Wilson. These are what Ben calls embodiments of "the circus-humbug instinct, the instinct of romantic lawlessness, the passion for righteousness, the love of pragmatic culture, the camp-meeting complex, the love of blare, the divinization of home and mother, and the profound need of the mask of idealism." . . .

As to music, *George Antheil* is to give a Carnegie Hall concert on April tenth. Come all ye! Who is George? He is the twenty-four-year-old modernist American composer-pianist. Will that hold you? He returns to his native land to make his first appearance in America on the concert stage. *Donald S. Friede,* vice president of Boni and Liveright, is organizing his concert. The sensational "Ballet Mecanique" which nearly caused a riot at its Paris première will be performed. Antheil calls it an attempt to express America, Africa, and Steel. Sixteen mechanical pianos, for one thing, are employed in it. Antheil was born in Trenton, New Jersey, but lived abroad from the age of four till he was ten, at which time he was a violin virtuoso, playing with string quartets in Budapest, Warsaw, and Berlin. At six he had begun to compose. At thirteen, back in America, he wrote his first symphony. In this country he studied with Ernest Bloch and Van Sternberg. At twenty he went abroad again, where he has lived ever since, making his home in Paris. . . .

Albert and Charles Boni announce that owing to the short time allowed for the submission of manuscripts in their contest for a prize to be awarded the best negro novel submitted during the past year, and due to the limited number of manuscripts so far submitted, the judges find it advisable to extend the time limit for the submission of new manuscripts until July 1, 1927. . . .

Theatre Arts, Inc., announces an exhibition of primitive African sculpture, masks, fetishes, ivory and wood sculptures, musical instruments, tissues and objects of decorative art, to be held at the New Art Circle, 35 West 57th Street, this city, from February 7th to March 5th. If you are interested, send *Theatre Arts* your name and address. . . .

The forthcoming publication of the abridged edition of *Colonel T. E. Lawrence's* Arabian memoirs is an event. Colonel Lawrence was the mysterious Englishman who went into Arabia with the British Expeditionary force and appeared a few years later at the head of an army of three thousand Arabs revolting against Turkish rule. He has become an almost legendary figure. Now you have from his own pen what happened to him in the desert. His first manuscript was stolen at a railway station, presumably at the instigation of certain high diplomatic personages who had good reason to hope it would never be published. He wrote it again from memory, some 40,000 words. At first he refused to publish, later agreed to a sumptuous edition limited to eighty copies, to protect the political secrets embedded in the story. After ten years, however, he has agreed to the appearance of a public edition. The limited Oxford edition was called "The Seven Pillars of Wisdom," and the author's name did not appear on the title-page. The public edition is to be published over here by Doran and called "Revolt in the Desert." . . .

"War Birds, the Diary of an Unknown Aviator" (Doran) is, by the way, a fascinating document. And have you been reading *Elliott Springs's* stuff in *Liberty.* He writes with great vividness concerning fliers' lives in the Great War. . . .

A researcher of Etna Street (good name!) Berkeley, California, writes:

"Ferocious Sonnets," is it? Are you making a collection of them? I stump you to beat this one. It was written by a wealthy but disgruntled cattle-man, not long before he bumped himself off with an automatic. He called it

THIS DAMNED OLD ROUND

This life is hell. What is the mortal use
Of all the motions that we men must make?
We lie abed until our bellies ache;
Crawl out to cram them; for no known excuse
Burn out our brain-pans with a pint of juice;
Nuzzle the women; scramble for the jake;
Run with our pains to some diplomaed fake;
And die, as stiff as any croaked cayuse.

This comes to what? To propagate a race
Of loafers, scrappers, vermin on the earth.
The game is silly. My recommendation
Is plain as salt: let's drop the whole disgrace,
Emasculate each man-child at its birth
And spike this wheel of imbecile creation!

Well, that goes up on the bulletin board with the better-turned sonnets of *Leonard Bacon* and *Waldo Pierce.* Now let's have some more! We are perfectly serious. We are out to collect them. We know a publisher who's interested. They may be culled from any time, any place, any old file, or they may be written yesterday, for all we care,—just so they are ferocious enough and, at the same time, don't get us in jail. Of course we've thought of a number of classics already, including *Swinburne* and *Don Marquis.* . . .

"Of course," writes *Felix Sper* from Paris, "the news has probably reached you to the effect that the Edwin Markham of France,—he who celebrated the lowly lives of beggars and menials in verse, was once imprisoned for blasphemy, but ultimately crowned by the French Academy,—recently died: namely *Jean Richepin.*"

But have you learnt (he continued) that Germany's greatest lyric poet, *Reiner Maria Rilke,* has likewise returned to his fathers? To this obituary notice I hasten to add a resurrection. Remember *W. B. Trites,* author of "John Cave" which created a ripple some years ago? Well, sir, after disappearing from the American scene, Trites will re-enter on the trail of "The Gypsy."

Old *John Fraser* of the John C. Winston Company lets us know about the advanced edition of the Simplified Dictionary. To get it off the press the initial copy of this book required an investment of over two hundred thousand dollars. The new Winston Simplified Dictionary is edited by *Dr. William D. Lewis,* once a Philadelphia school teacher. There are a hundred thousand words, three thousand brand new illillustrations, and a great many beautifully colored plates and maps. Yet this is all in one moderate-sized volume of medium weight. . . .

A new publishing unit, known as Random House, with offices at 73 West 45th Street, is to be devoted to the creation and distribution in America of books of typographical excellence. *Elmer Adler,* head of the Pynson Printers and *Bennett A. Cerf* and *Donald S. Klopfer,* owners of the Modern Library, are in control. The firm has the exclusive American agency for the sale of the limited editions of the Nonesuch Press. The first Nonesuch book that Random House will distribute in America is *Herman Melville's* "Benito Coreno," illustrated by *E. McKnight Kauffer.* The American allotment (of the same printing and identical imprint as the English) is 750 copies. . . .

The Oriole Press of Berkeley Heights, New Jersey, announces "Eliseé and Elie Reclus" (In Memoriam). *Joseph Ishill,* typographer of the Oriole Press, should be addressed *in re* subscriptions for an advance copy of this book at eight dollars; after May 15, 1927, the book will be issued at ten dollars. *Dr. Isaac Goldberg* has said that Mr. Ishill is working in the tradition of *William Morris.* . . .

Simon and Schuster announce "Whoops Dearie," a humorous novel by *Peter Arno,* the leading characters of which are the now famous Whoops Sisters of the *New Yorker.* Mr. Arno will, naturally, illustrate his novel. . . .

We've been reading a detective story entitled, "The Footsteps that Stopped," by *A. Fielding* (Knopf), and can recommend it as a darn good one to all interested in such. We haven't read the new, reissued *Agatha Christie* one, "The Affair at Styles," though she is our favorite detective story writer at present. However, the Oxford University Press has now produced "Crime and Detection," a collection of short stories by *Poe, Conan Doyle, Arthur Morrison, R. Austin Freeman, Ernest Barash, Chesterton, H. C. Bailey, Hornung,* and *Barry Pain,*—which is worth putting up on your classic mystery shelf. . . .

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